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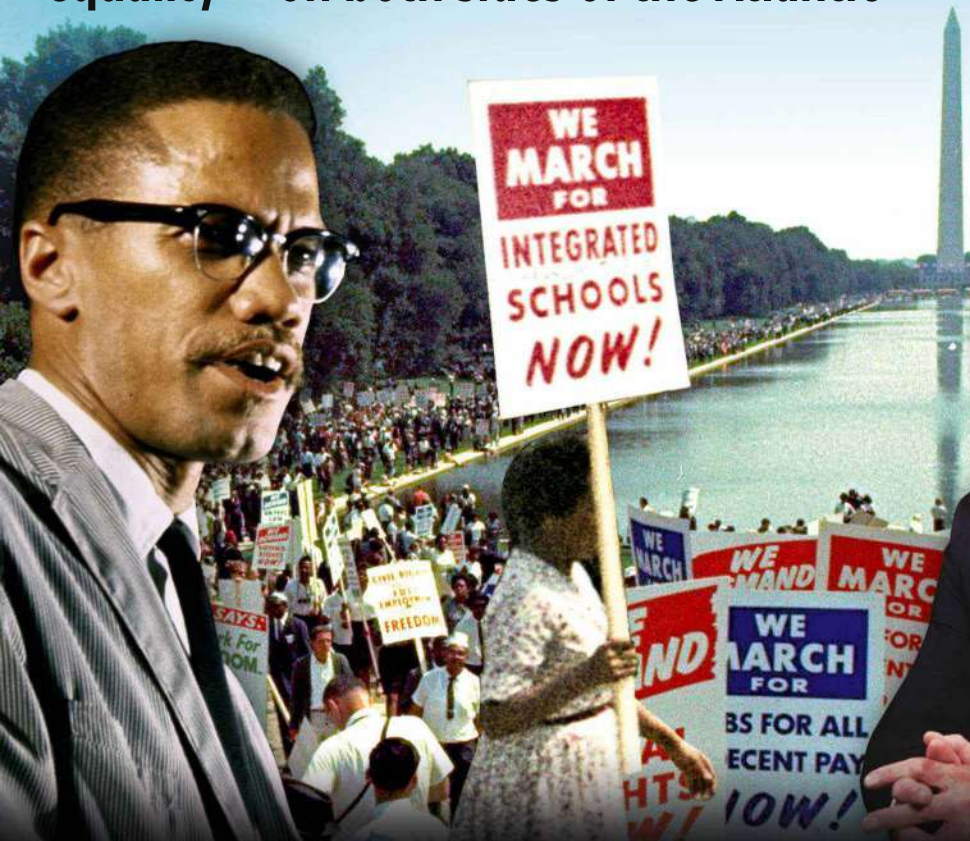

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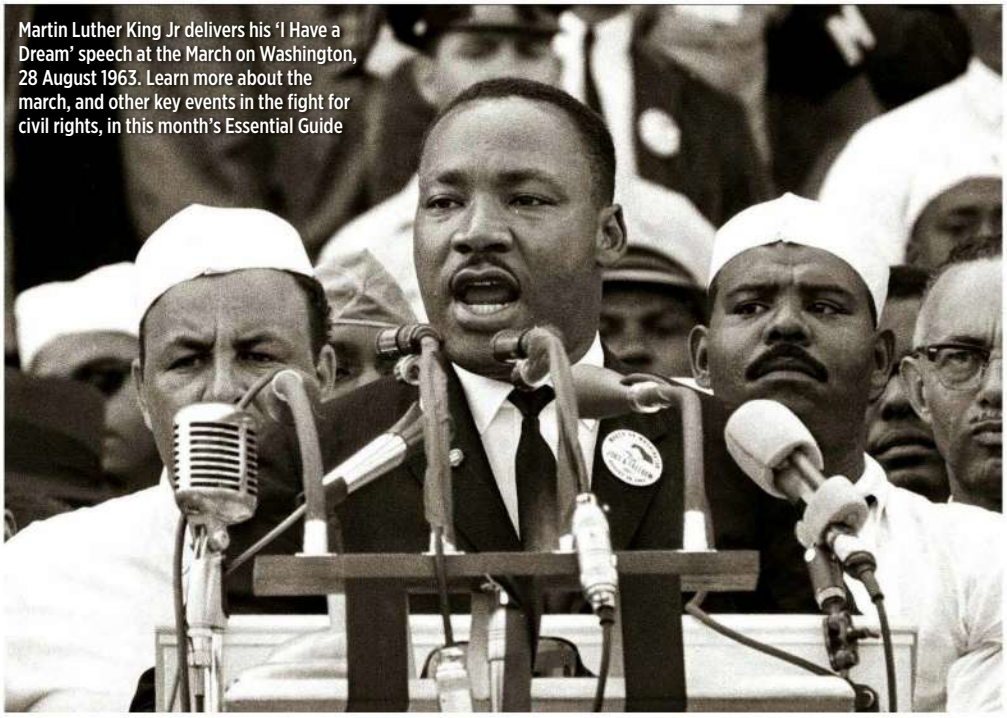

Martin Luther King Jr delivers his 'I Have a Dream' speech at the March on Washington, 28 August 1963. Learn more about the march, and other key events in the fight for civil rights, in this month's Essential Guide

August 2023 marks the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington, the biggest civil rights march ever staged in America. The event is remembered for many reasons, not least for Martin Luther King Jr's rousing 'I Have a Dream' speech, an oration that is now widely viewed as one of the greatest of all time. **But the struggle for racial equality in the US and the UK stretches back much further than the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s**, as we, with the help of expert Professor Adriane Lentz-Smith, explore in this month's Essential Guide. Turn to page 23 to get started.

Elsewhere, we look at the entrepreneurial spirit of two young women who, in 1939, set up shop in London's Bond Street and **opened the doors to the Marriage Bureau, Britain's first modern dating agency** (*page 47*). We also investigate the often gruesome reality of Victorian and Edwardian surgery (*page 54*); examine what might have happened had Hitler's Wehrmacht not invaded the Soviet Union (*page 16*); and **uncover five incredible facts about the history of alcohol** – from the 18th-century craze for gin, to the Neolithic origins of beer (*page 20*).

Plus, if you're after some tips for making money the historical way, check out the next instalment of our Life Hacks from History column (*page 15*).

See you next month!

Charlotte Hodgman
Editor

THIS MONTH'S BIG NUMBERS

£3.5m
The amount, in modern terms, lost by Isaac Newton in the South Sea Bubble stock fraud

>250,000
The number of people who took part in the March on Washington on 28 August 1963

10
The sum, in guineas, of the 'After Marriage Fee' paid by successful couples matched by the Marriage Bureau

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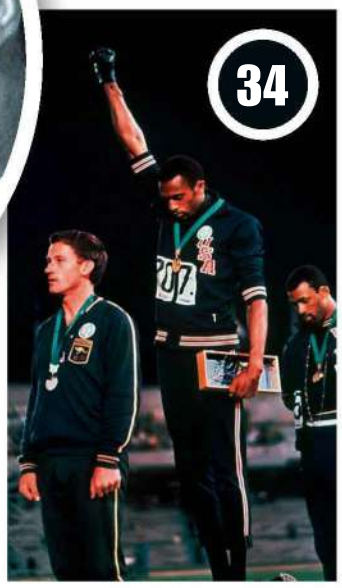
◀ Meet the men and women at the vanguard of the Civil Rights Movement – and discover the sacrifices they made in order to achieve their goals



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SNAPSHOTS

1945 BUDAPEST UNCHAINED

Constructed between 1839 and 1849, the Széchenyi Chain Bridge was one of Budapest's most cherished landmarks. But on 18 January 1945, retreating German forces destroyed all five of the city's crossings over the Danube, sparing only the Chain Bridge's towering pillars. Fortunately, in 1947, the Hungarian authorities set about restoring the structure to its former glory, extending its pillar portals, broadening its abutments, and adding pedestrian and tram subways. On 20 November 1949 – exactly a century after its original dedication – the Chain Bridge reopened, symbolising Budapest's resurgence from the ravages of war.

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SNAPSHOTS

c1896
ARCTIC DWELLERS

The Sámi are a nomadic people from Sámpi, an area spanning northern Scandinavia and Russia's Kola Peninsula. While their true origins are a mystery, what is undisputed is that the Sámi have endured years of persecution by the cultures around them: in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Norwegian government tried to forcibly assimilate the Sámi, causing dislocation and strife. Today, indigenous rights groups are doing much to preserve the old Sámi way of life, and since the 1980s, they have had an official flag and parliament. While few Sámi now dwell in tents all year round, this colourised image of a family from c1896 shows a style of dress still commonly seen in Sámi culture today.

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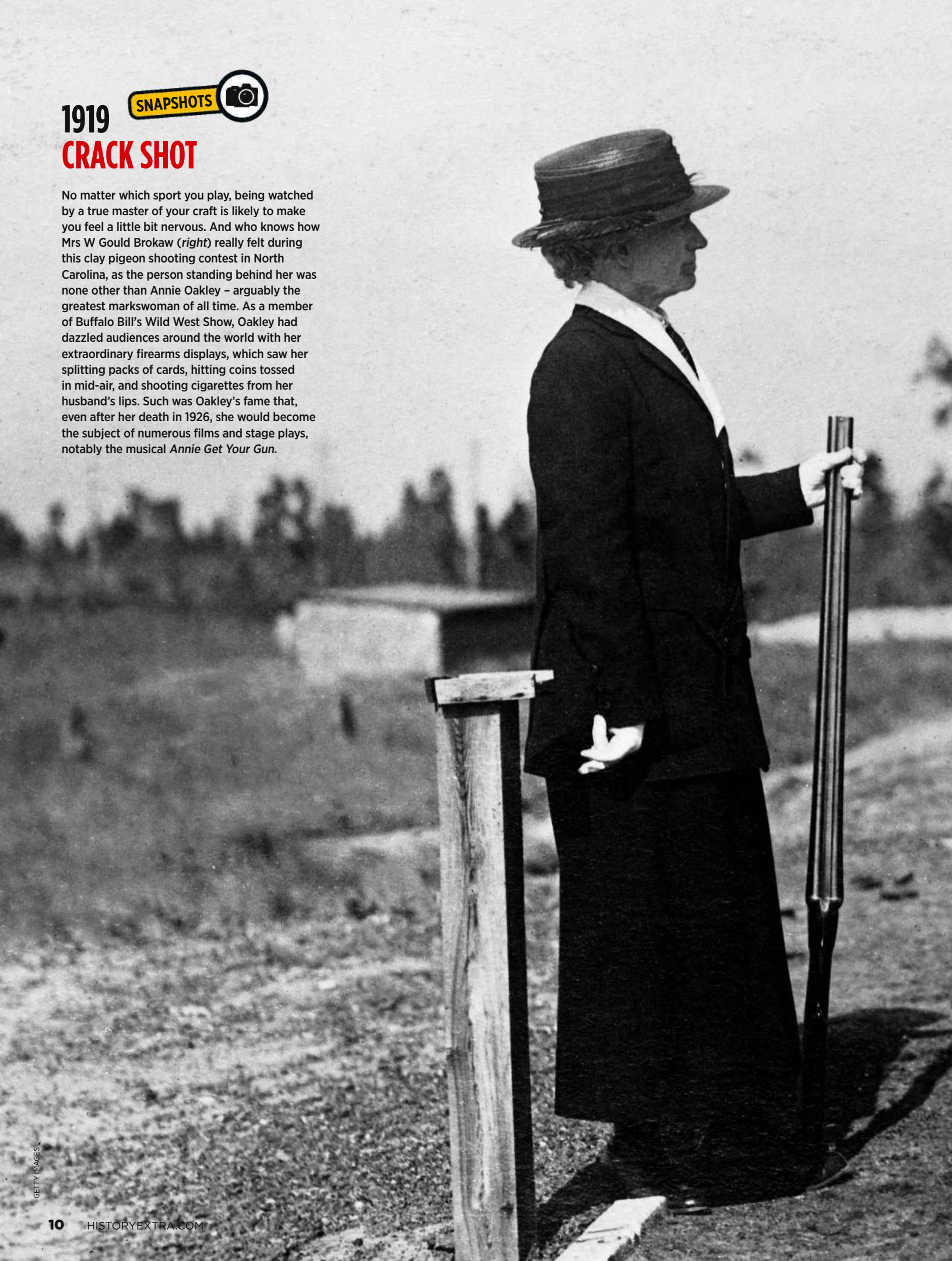
SNAPSHOTS

1919
CRACK SHOT

No matter which sport you play, being watched by a true master of your craft is likely to make you feel a little bit nervous. And who knows how Mrs W Gould Brokaw (*right*) really felt during this clay pigeon shooting contest in North Carolina, as the person standing behind her was none other than Annie Oakley – arguably the greatest markswoman of all time. As a member of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, Oakley had dazzled audiences around the world with her extraordinary firearms displays, which saw her splitting packs of cards, hitting coins tossed in mid-air, and shooting cigarettes from her husband's lips. Such was Oakley's fame that, even after her death in 1926, she would become the subject of numerous films and stage plays, notably the musical *Annie Get Your Gun*.



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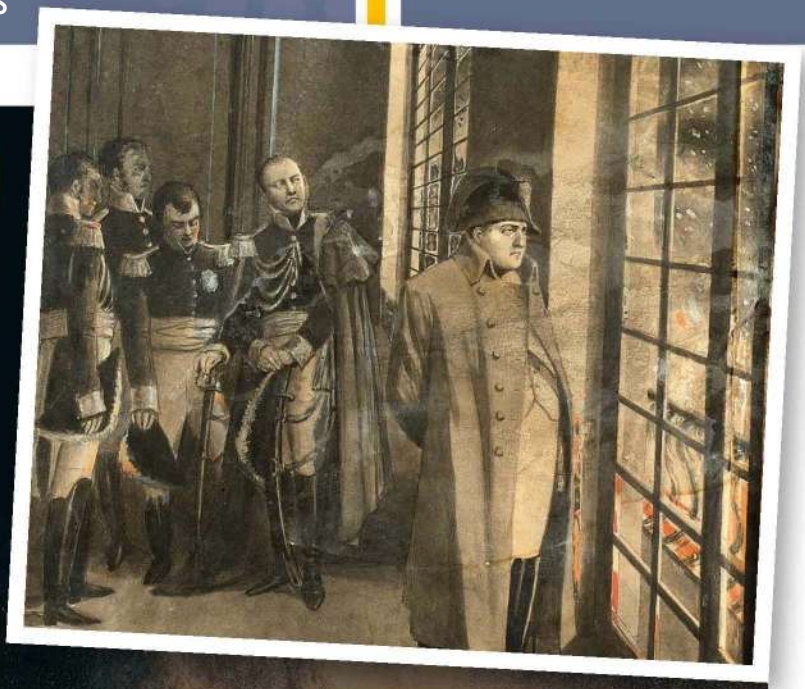
THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

WE LOOK BACK AT SEPTEMBER'S KEY ANNIVERSARIES

14 SEPTEMBER 1812
NAPOLEON'S INVASION OF RUSSIA TURNS TO ASH



Following his pyrrhic victory at the battle of Borodino, French leader Napoleon Bonaparte advances towards Moscow, the spiritual heart of Russia. Yet, as he approaches its gates, he is greeted by silence – no dignitaries, no nobles, no one of significance. Reports from the first French troops reveal an eerie spectacle: the streets are mostly deserted.

Later that night, news breaks about a fire engulfing the Kitay-gorod bazaar. French officers suspect arson, attributing the blaze to resistance efforts. Napoleon observes the spreading inferno from the Kremlin as it engulfs countless wooden structures, including churches, shops and warehouses. As the fire encroaches on the Kremlin itself, Napoleon reluctantly relocates to the Petrovsky Palace further northwest. His dream turns to ash amid the smouldering ruins.

Weeks later, with no sign of Russian surrender, he orders his army to embark on a gruelling retreat – claiming thousands of his troops' lives in the process.

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8 SEPTEMBER 1504
MICHELANGELO UNVEILS HIS STATUE OF DAVID

After working on the project for three years, Michelangelo unveils his statue of David to the people of Florence. Despite having been intended for display at the city's cathedral, the authorities are so impressed by the figure of the biblical giant-killer that they insist on the sculpture being sited in the more public setting of the Piazza della Signoria.

The unveiling is not without its problems, though. Not only does it take 40 men four days to move the statue from Michelangelo's workshop to its new home, but Florence's governor asserts that its nose is too large. Before the big reveal, Michelangelo ascends the surrounding scaffold and sprinkles down handfuls of marble dust, pretending to make the required alterations.

11 SEPTEMBER 1973
PINOCHET SEIZES POWER IN CHILE

General Augusto Pinochet leads a coup against President Salvador Allende in Chile. Allende refuses to resign and addresses the nation, vowing to pay with his life for the loyalty of the people. As military forces bombard the presidential palace, Allende either kills himself with a gunshot or is assassinated. Pinochet seizes control, initiating a brutal era.

Dissidents are imprisoned and tortured, and thousands are killed, with the national stadium the site of unspeakable atrocities. The coup marks the end of Allende's three-year Marxist experiment and ushers in a period of autocratic rule and human rights abuses in Chile. The regime lasts for nearly two decades until Pinochet finally steps down in March 1990.

17 SEPTEMBER 1849
HARRIET TUBMAN BREAKS FREE

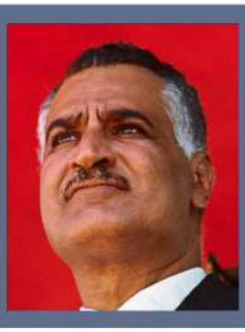
Facing sale after her master's death, enslaved African-American woman Harriet Tubman escapes her Maryland plantation in search of safety in Pennsylvania. Although she finds work as a housekeeper in Philadelphia, she later travels to the American South and helps friends, family members and other enslaved people escape to freedom via the network of secret routes and safe houses known as the 'Underground Railroad'.

19 SEPTEMBER 1356
THE BLACK PRINCE CAPTURES THE FRENCH KING

The first phase of the decades-long conflict between England and France known as the Hundred Years' War nears its end with the capture of France's King John II close to the town of Poitiers. The seizure, which comes after a fierce battle in which the English forces are vastly outnumbered, is masterminded by Edward, Prince of Wales (*pictured*) – perhaps better known as the 'Black Prince'. He will come to be regarded as one of England's greatest-ever warriors.

DIED: 28 SEPT 1970
GAMAL ABDEL NASSER

Egypt's second president dies aged 52 in Cairo after suffering a sudden heart attack. He will come to be remembered for his dogged pursuit of pan-Arab nationalism and his instrumental role in the 1952 Egyptian Revolution.



BORN: 23 SEPT 1869
TYPHOID MARY

Mary Mallon is born in Cookstown, Ireland, and later emigrates to the US aged 15. As an asymptomatic carrier of the bacterium *Salmonella typhi*, she inadvertently infects numerous people. Her case advances the importance of public health measures against disease.

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LIFE HACK #04

How to get rich

Pssst! Fancy making some cash? **Justin Pollard** tells us what we can learn from the lives of history's wealthiest individuals, and why it takes much more than brains and brawn to make lots of money

If history could really teach us how to get rich, you'd likely be reading *Tatler* rather than this. But history can certainly give us some tips on what *not* to do.

In the British Isles, the first people to amass great personal wealth lived during the Bronze Age. Unlike the Neolithic period, when most people were laid to rest in communal tombs, wealthy individuals were interred in individual burial mounds, each filled with precious objects they chose to take with them to the next life. Since that time, it seems that everyone has been competing with each other to get their hands on the most 'stuff'.

The easiest method is to steal from someone else. Few have been better at this than Adam Worth, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's model for Moriarty (the enemy of Sherlock Holmes), who had a knack of walking into people's houses and taking what he fancied. But be careful – when Worth stole Gainsborough's famous portrait of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, he fell in love with it and refused to sell it on – much to the annoyance of his gang.

No matter how much money you put away, you're unlikely to become as wealthy as Mansa Musa of Mali, depicted here in a 1375 manuscript

RISKY BUSINESS

Fraud is perhaps subtler than burglary, the South Sea Bubble of 1720 being a stock fraud that even took in Isaac Newton, who lost nearly £3.5m in modern terms on the scam. And that's nothing compared to the $15m that was stolen in the original 'Ponzi' scheme orchestrated by con artist Charles Ponzi, or the whopping $64bn stolen by disgraced financier Bernie Madoff. But again, be careful. After the collapse of the South Sea Bubble, Britain's chancellor of the Exchequer was sent to the Tower of London, while Ponzi and Madoff were also incarcerated for their scams.

If crime isn't your thing, perhaps you could try inheriting the cash instead. In 1677, Sir Thomas Grosvenor married Mary Davies. He was 21, she was, erm, 12 (although that wasn't unusual for the time). However, what motivated Sir Thomas was not Mary herself, but the 500 acres of land she had inherited to the west of London. Centuries later, the land became Mayfair, Park Lane and Belgravia, and the Grosvenor heirs – as dukes of Westminster – were set for life.

If you don't have rich relatives, you could always try hunting for money. In 2021, an auctioneer found a copy of the US Declaration of Independence in an attic, which later sold for $4.5m. And if that's not enough, you could try searching at sea: the treasure haul from the shipwreck code-named 'Black Swan', found in 2007, contained 17 tonnes of coins valued at $500m.

THE COST OF GREED

If all else fails, you might have to take the hard route and earn your fortune. Casanova made his money not from love, but from running the French National Lottery, while German banker Jakob Fugger (known as 'Fugger the Rich') created the world's first news service to help him get ahead of events and make financial decisions. His fortune was equivalent to 2 per cent of the entire gross domestic product of Europe.

Finally, a word of warning. It is possible to get *too* rich. In the early 20th century, Osman Ali Khan, the last *nizam* (monarch) of Hyderabad, possessed more than $100m in gold and silver bullion, and $400m in jewellery. But all that wealth brought problems in the form of at least 100 grandchildren, all keen to get a share of the dwindling fortune.

And then there's probably the richest person who has ever lived, Mansa Musa of Mali. In 1324 he set off on a pilgrimage to Mecca carrying so much gold that his wild spending in places like Cairo caused rampant inflation – and depressed the economies he travelled through for a generation.

So, if it's possible for riches to make us poor, then perhaps history is telling us to stop trying to get rich in the first place.

JUSTIN POLLARD is an acclaimed historian and writer. As a historical consultant he has worked on more than 50 film and TV projects, from *Elizabeth* and *Mulan* to the BBC quiz show *QI*

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WHAT IF...

ADOLF HITLER HAD NOT SENT THE WEHRMACHT INTO THE SOVIET UNION?

Professor Evan Mawdsley tells **Nige Tassell** about the direction that World War II may have taken had the Nazis not turned eastwards

The largest military offensive in history, Operation Barbarossa – which lasted from 22 June 1941 until 7 January 1942 – proved disastrous for Adolf Hitler and arguably signalled the beginning of his decline from power. Germany suffered more than 750,000 casualties. It was a game-changer. The course of the war altered, ending in Germany's defeat. But what would have happened had Hitler not sent the Wehrmacht, the nation's unified armed forces, eastwards?

"The only military alternative to invading the Soviet Union would have been to knock Britain out of the war." That's the view of Evan Mawdsley, honorary professorial research fellow in the School of Humanities at the University of Glasgow and author of many books on World War II, including *Thunder in the East: the Nazi-Soviet War, 1941–1945* (Bloomsbury, 2015).

"Of course, Hitler could have settled for the stunning successes of 1938–1940, which gave 'Greater Germany' control over western and central continental Europe, from the Pyrenees to the Vistula River in Poland, and from Norway to the Alps. There was also an alliance with Italy, and compliance from a right-wing government of occupied France. But Hitler was in a hurry. He wanted to keep the initiative and stay in control of events."

SEEKING PEACE

Had he refocused his attentions on Britain rather than the Soviet Union, Hitler had two options. One route was diplomacy, applying pressure on London to accept Nazi control of such a large swathe of Europe. Professor Mawdsley explains that such an approach might not have fallen on deaf ears in Westminster. "There were some politicians in Britain who would have accepted the German political domination of continental Europe in exchange for peace and German acceptance of the status quo as far as the British empire was concerned."

Hitler's other option would have been to engage Britain in direct combat, a path that was an uneasy one. "Britain was not a second-rate power. It had the potential to fight Germany and blockade continental Europe, especially if supported by the United States. Plus, it would have taken a long time to build a navy powerful enough to compete with that of Britain."

Hitler could also have affected Britain by directing his military resources not eastwards but further south, specifically around the Mediterranean rim, be it Spain, North Africa or the Middle East. The cooperation of Spain – officially neutral although General Franco shared an ideological outlook with both Hitler and Mussolini – could have allowed Hitler access to secure Gibraltar and thus deny the passage of British armaments and personnel to North Africa. But this would have made Spain, still recovering from the effects of its civil war, susceptible to British counter-attacks.

A CONSTANT THREAT

Had Hitler engaged Britain, or concentrated the Wehrmacht's efforts away from any eastern front, there was always the danger of what the Soviets might do while the Nazis' backs were turned. The Soviet Union always represented a threat, what Professor Mawdsley calls "a potential enemy looming in the background".

Had Hitler delayed in invading the Soviet Union, the stronger that Stalin's continually rearming forces could become. Although Professor Mawdsley doesn't see them as sufficiently capable of conquering central Europe in 1941 or 1942, he could envisage such a scenario a little further down the line. The longer

DID YOU KNOW?

CAVE DWELLER

Operation Barbarossa was named after the 12th-century Holy Roman emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who – according to legend – remained asleep inside a cave along with his knights, waiting to restore Germany to its ancient greatness.

IN CONTEXT

In the early summer of 1941, Germany launched Operation Barbarossa, a huge invasion of the Soviet Union. The idea behind the operation was not only to diminish, and possibly demolish, Communist ideology in Europe, but also to create *Lebensraum* – or 'living space' – to which Germans could be relocated and from where the German way of life, as defined by Nazi rule, could be protected and advanced. But the campaign was a complete disaster for Hitler, a terrible miscalculation of how easy he thought the invasion would be. It is estimated that around 200,000 German soldiers lost their lives during Barbarossa's deeply bloody six months.

Hitler plans Operation Barbarossa in 1941. The Führer's decision to invade the Soviet Union was a dire miscalculation that would prove fatal to his regime

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"THERE WAS ALWAYS THE DANGER OF WHAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT DO WHILE THE NAZIS' BACKS WERE TURNED"

Hitler delayed in launching Operation Barbarossa, the stronger the chance that Stalin might authorise a pre-emptive invasion of his own. Had this occurred, it's unclear how long the war may have ended up lasting. It could have all been over before 1945, or it might have dragged on well beyond.

Had Stalin invaded and defeated the Nazis, would he have been content with stopping there, with just ridding the world of Hitler? Or might he have launched his own expansionist plans, with the Iron Curtain ultimately falling somewhat further west than it eventually did during the Cold War?

ABOVE: **Wehrmacht soldiers in action on the eastern front. Millions of German troops were involved in the failed military offensive**

RIGHT: **The European winter of 1941–42 was the coldest of the 20th century – and it proved punishing for the Wehrmacht. Here, some of its men enjoy a moment of warmth**

If so, what would have been the reaction from Washington?

"This is getting really interesting, but a little too hypothetical," cautions Professor Mawdsley, noting the idea of a rearmed Soviet Union being quite that powerful, that rampant, to be a little fanciful. After all, until they became bogged down in that particular Soviet winter, the Wehrmacht were pretty formidable, having conquered so much of the European mainland, as Professor Mawdsley concludes. "Could the Red Army really have defeated Germany in a war without help from the British and the Americans?"

GET HOOKED

LISTEN
Writer and broadcaster Jonathan Dimbleby discusses Operation Barbarossa on the *HistoryExtra* podcast:
historyextra.com/operation-barbarossa-pod

NEXT MONTH
What if the 'Glorious Revolution' had failed?

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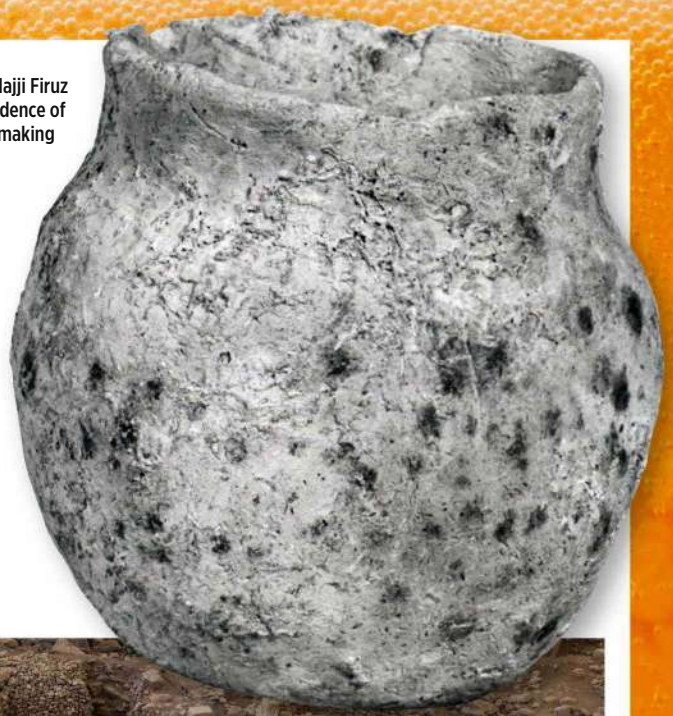
5 THINGS YOU (PROBABLY) DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE HISTORY OF ALCOHOL

Professor Phil Withington looks at humanity's long love of booze – from the caves of prehistory to the gin houses of Georgian London

1 BREWING MAY HAVE BEEN A FEATURE OF NEOLITHIC SOCIETIES



Containers found at Hajji Firuz Tepe, Iran, provide evidence of prehistoric winemaking

One of the earliest pieces of evidence regarding the drinking of alcohol dates back approximately 13,000 years, to the Raqefet Caves in Israel's Carmel mountains, where archaeologists uncovered residues of a beer-like substance in 2018. The ancient brew, resembling gruel in texture, was possibly utilised by the semi-nomadic Natufian people for ceremonial feasting. Further north, similar evidence suggests that a type of beer production may have also occurred at Göbekli Tepe in Turkey during the pre-pottery Neolithic period, spanning roughly 8500 BC–5500 BC.

But for drinkers curious about the genealogy of the beverages they enjoy today, the earliest chemical evidence of beer crafted using barley stems from the Godin Tepe site in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran. This important find, dating from approximately 3500 BC–3100 BC, could be considered a forefather of modern beers.

Based on these examples, archaeologists argue that the Near East served as a crucible for the invention and production of alcoholic drinks. But it seems that it wasn't just beer our ancestors enjoyed. In the 1990s, archaeologists working at the Hajji Firuz Tepe site in Iran, which dates to around 5400 BC–5000 BC, unearthed sediment deposits at the base of an amphora (storage jar) containing tannin and tartrate crystals – a possible indication of wine production.

An even earlier tale unfolds in China. Residues discovered on pottery fragments from the Neolithic Jiahu sites, which have been radiocarbon-dated to c7000 BC–6600 BC, point to the consumption of fermented rice, honey and fruit. This would place China at the forefront of ancient wine production, long preceding developments witnessed in Europe.

Part of the Göbekli Tepe archaeological site in what is now Şanlıurfa Province, southern Turkey. According to academic research published in 2012, its Stone Age inhabitants were brewing a rudimentary form of beer there between 8500 BC–5500 BC

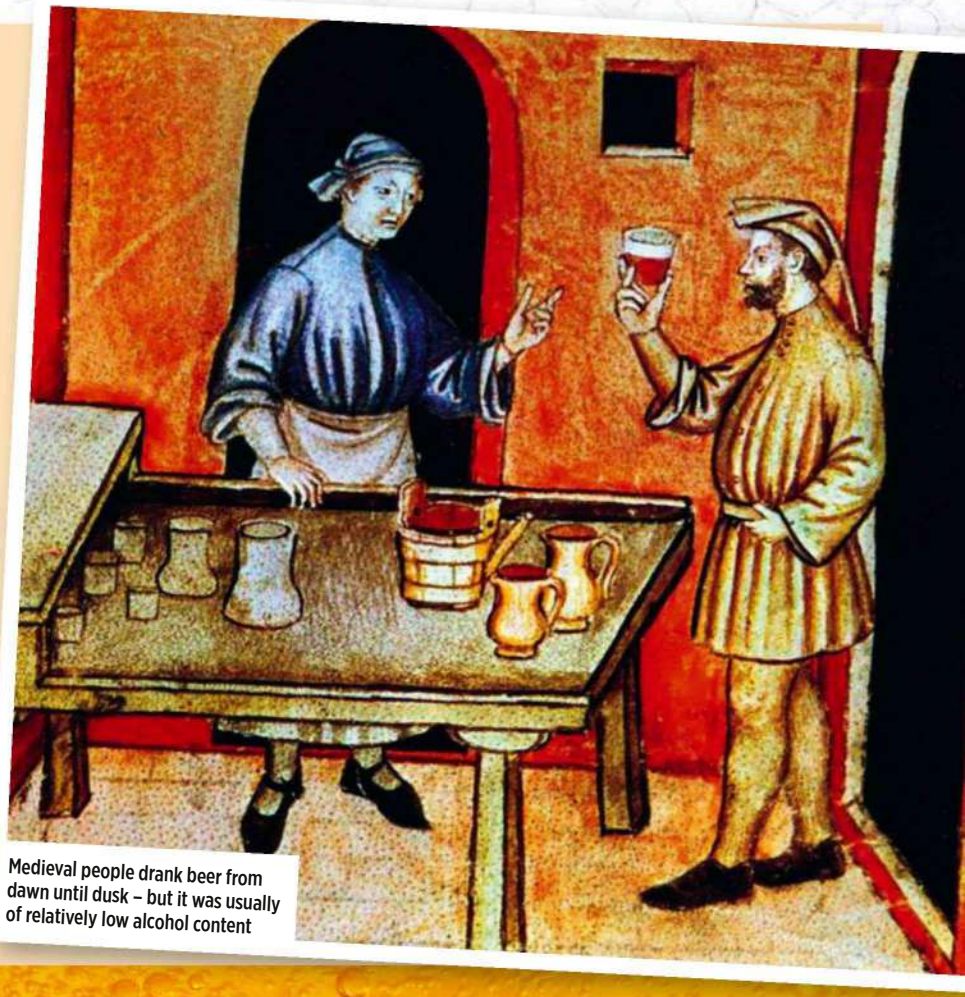
GETTY IMAGES X3, TOPFOTO X1, ALAMY X2

2 MEDIEVAL PEOPLE DRANK ALL DAY

During the medieval period, the consumption of beer throughout the day was a common practice, but it is essential to understand the nuances surrounding this tradition. Drinks were categorised into gradations based on factors such as ingredients, fermentation duration and brew strength, which in turn led to terms like small beer, medium beer and strong beer.

While it is a misconception that people never drank water, small beer held a significant place in people's diets and was consumed at all hours of the day, starting from breakfast until the final drink of the night. However, it is important to note that the small beer's relatively low alcohol content did not mean that individuals were in a perpetual state of intoxication. Indeed, the assumption that medieval society consisted of functioning alcoholics is incorrect.

Overall, the consumption and production of alcoholic drinks primarily took place within domestic settings, such as homes, as well as in monastic environments, including university colleges in Oxford and Cambridge, and monasteries that boasted large brewery facilities. The strongest beers were more expensive, so it was far more likely for individuals from affluent backgrounds to have had experiences of intoxication than people lower down the social order.



Medieval people drank beer from dawn until dusk – but it was usually of relatively low alcohol content

ABOVE: William Hogarth's satirical print *Gin Lane* offered an alarming vision of a society dependent on distilled spirits

LEFT: In contrast, an illustration by George Cruikshank shows a happy family enjoying fresh water from a public fountain – promoted as a solution to curbing the so-called 'gin craze'

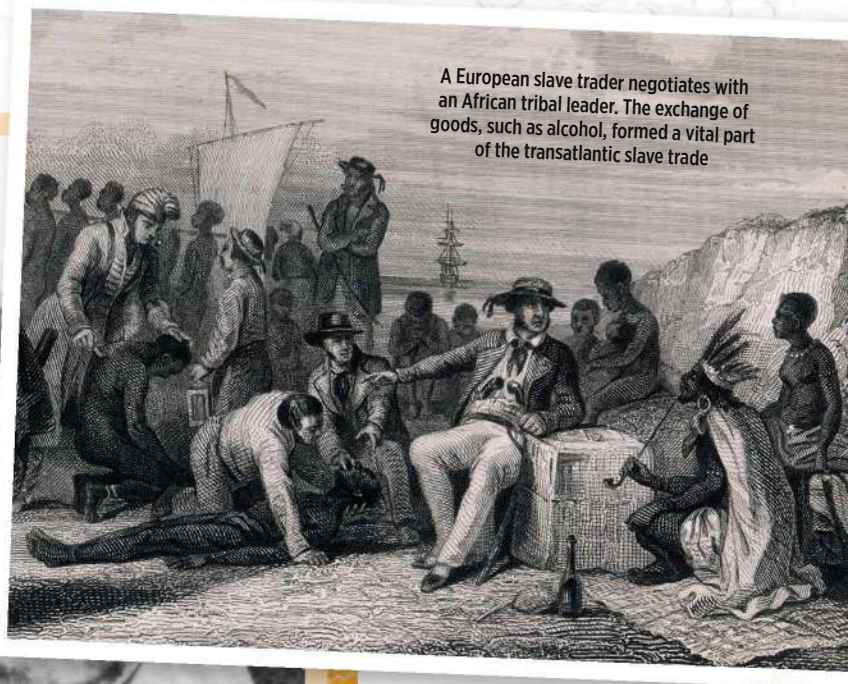
3 GIN WAS NEARLY OUTLAWED IN BRITAIN

One notable historical event that aimed to limit the consumption of alcohol was the campaign against the so-called 'gin craze' in Georgian London.

Since the second half of the 17th century, gin – also known as Geneva – had gained popularity as a mass-produced distilled liquor, distinguishing it from other fermented drinks like beer. However, by the 18th century, concerns had arisen among contemporaries regarding the consumption of such spirits, primarily among the lower classes and women.

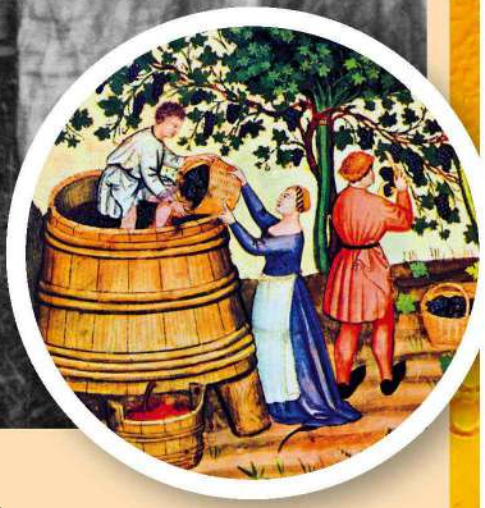
This led to a prejudiced and targeted attack on the gin craze, evident in media campaigns, sermons and treatises, as well as satirical images like William Hogarth's 1751 print *Gin Lane* (*shown left*). Indeed, the concerns were so great that Parliament passed legislation that made the consumption of Geneva extremely difficult and prohibitive for women and the lower social orders.

This historical example is intriguing because it did not entail outright prohibition of alcohol for the upper or middle classes. Instead, it highlighted a deliberate and focused effort to curtail and stigmatise the drinking habits of a specific section of society. It is particularly striking to observe parallels in modern times, when tabloids have been all too willing to portray certain people – particularly women – as being out of control binge-drinkers.



A European slave trader negotiates with an African tribal leader. The exchange of goods, such as alcohol, formed a vital part of the transatlantic slave trade

THIS IMAGE: A trio of American women share a glass of wine, c1930. By the 20th century, stereotypes about female alcohol consumption were starting to shift



RIGHT: An illustration from a medieval health handbook shows a woman assisting with winemaking

4 BREWING BEER WAS OFTEN A WOMAN'S JOB

Women's relationship with alcohol has evolved significantly over time. Historically, women were excluded from participating in the more pleasurable and recreational aspects of alcohol consumption, which were predominantly reserved for men. Instead, they typically only drank alcohol within domestic settings, and for reasons concerning nutrition and diet. When they did encounter alcohol, it was mostly with regards to its production and service. In medieval England, for instance, it was women who often took charge of the brewing process and ran establishments like ale houses, inns and taverns.

As discussed on the previous page, the emergence of the gin craze during the 17th and 18th centuries continued to highlight deep-rooted gender differences in what was deemed 'acceptable' alcohol consumption. But in the 20th century, particularly in the years that followed World War II, there was a significant shift. Women in western societies gained increasing opportunities to engage in levels of consumption that more closely resembled men's drinking habits. Furthermore, they could engage in drinking socially together, without having to rely on the presence of their male counterparts.

Overall, the relationship between women and alcohol through history reflects wider shifts within society, and the long pursuit of gender equality.

5 ALCOHOL PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Alcohol played a vital role in the development of the transatlantic slave trade during the 16th and 17th centuries, specifically in facilitating the exchanges that took place between European traders and African leaders. Alcoholic drinks were very much treated as currency, and were used by the Europeans alongside other desirable goods in order to purchase slaves. Typically, there would have been an element of feasting to accompany the gift-giving, too.

There's a lot of interesting new research taking place to examine the role of alcohol in exchange culture, which goes on to explore other alternative modes of exchange beyond those which are simply monetary.

GET HOOKED

LISTEN

These facts were derived from a recent episode of the *HistoryExtra* podcast featuring Phil Withington, professor of social and cultural history at the University of Sheffield and author of an upcoming book about the creation of England's global intoxicant economy. To stream it in full, visit *historyextra.com/alcohol-history-qa*

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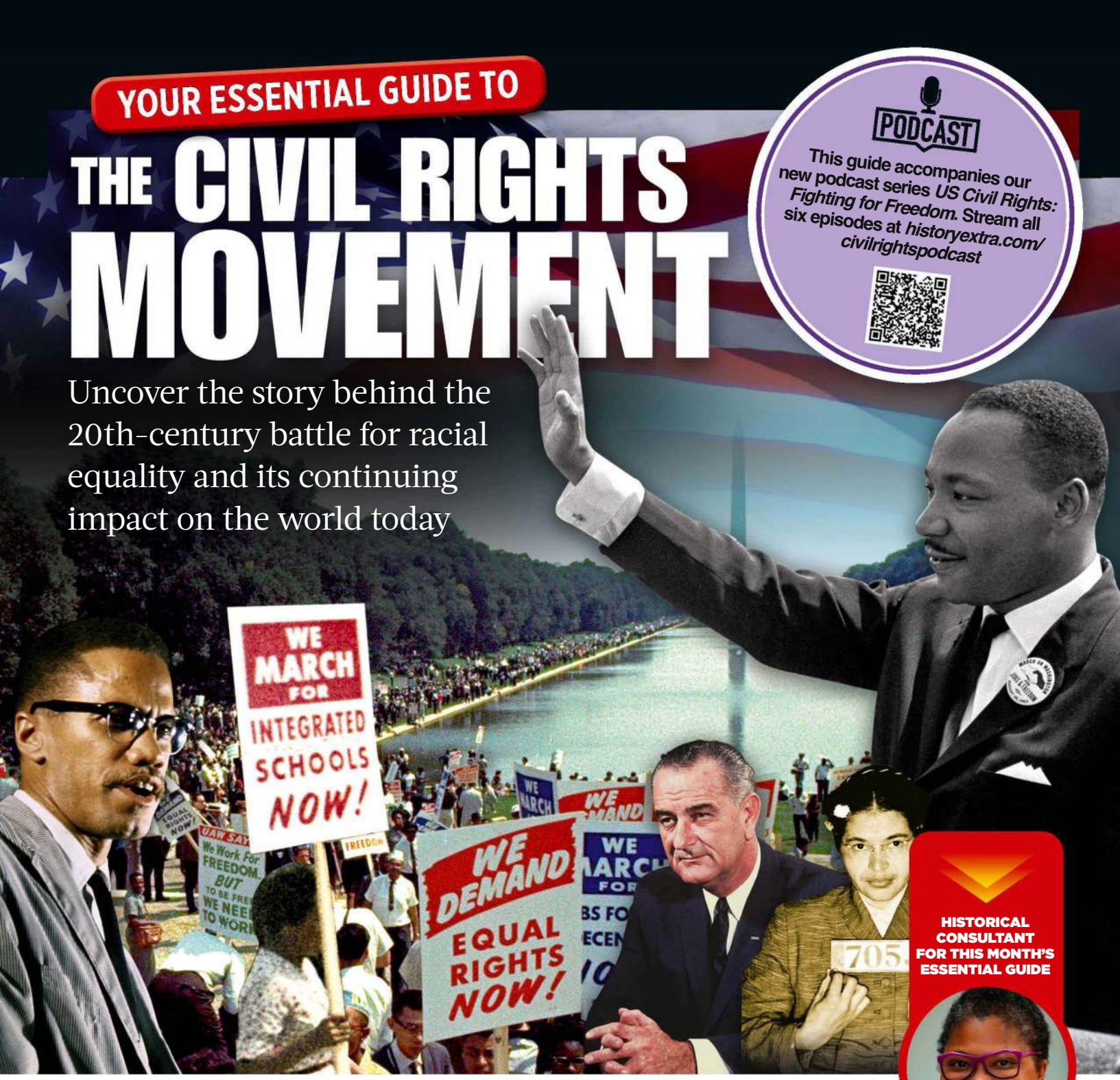
YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Uncover the story behind the 20th-century battle for racial equality and its continuing impact on the world today

PODCAST

This guide accompanies our new podcast series *US Civil Rights: Fighting for Freedom*. Stream all six episodes at *historyextra.com/civilrightspodcast*



24 The long road to racial equality
Professor Adriane Lentz-Smith examines the events that led to the birth of the Civil Rights Movement

28 13 moments that shaped a movement
Discover the milestones that would come to define the 20th-century battle for racial equality

34 The call of the Panthers
Find out how a young black activist inspired some campaigners to adopt a more radical stance

36 Leaders, luminaries and living legends
From Martin Luther King Jr to Maya Angelou, meet the men and women at the heart of the fight

40 A shared struggle
Discover how the actions of American civil rights activists inspired campaigners in Britain

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45 Get hooked
Take your knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement further with our pick of the best books, films and podcast episodes to check out next

HISTORICAL CONSULTANT FOR THIS MONTH'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE

ADRIANE LENTZ-SMITH
is associate professor of history at Duke University, North Carolina. A scholar of African-American history as well as 20th-century America, her works include *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Harvard University Press, 2009).

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ON THE PODCAST

THE LONG ROAD TO RACIAL EQUALITY

Professor Adriane Lentz-Smith examines the deep-rooted history of segregation and discrimination that fuelled the creation of the American Civil Rights Movement

Q: How would you define the Civil Rights Movement?

A: The Civil Rights Movement can be defined as a pivotal moment within the broader black freedom struggle, driven by a mass of Americans, particularly black Americans, who had been persistently fighting for equality across generations. The pressure exerted through this movement saw significant changes in both laws and societal perspectives in regards to the inclusive nature of democracy.

When I reflect upon the Civil Rights Movement, I think of it as a sequel to the Reconstruction Era [the period that followed the end of the American Civil War in 1865 that saw efforts to rebuild the nation and address racial inequality through political, social, and economic reforms]. Just like any sequel, though, there remains space in the narrative for further development, and there are still unresolved aspects.

Q: Do you consider the Reconstruction Era to be an unfinished revolution?

A: When we talk about revolutions, it's important to understand that they rarely have clear-cut endings. Instead, they tend to be ongoing processes with advances and setbacks along the way. Reconstruction was no exception.

In the wake of the Civil War, the United States was just beginning to explore the possibilities of black citizenship and the transformative impact it could have on the nation as a whole. It's important to note, though, that even when laws are passed or amendments ratified, their implementation and acceptance takes time, and in this case the forces of reaction – those who resisted change – ultimately gained the upper hand.

Throughout the Reconstruction years, black people were actively striving to claim and exercise their freedom, infusing it with meaning and purpose.

ABOVE: **Members of the original Ku Klux Klan, c1870. The group, disbanded and reformed on two separate occasions, terrorised black Americans**

BELOW LEFT: **People queue to receive relief from the Freedmen's Bureau, founded in 1865 to help refugees and formerly enslaved people in the South**

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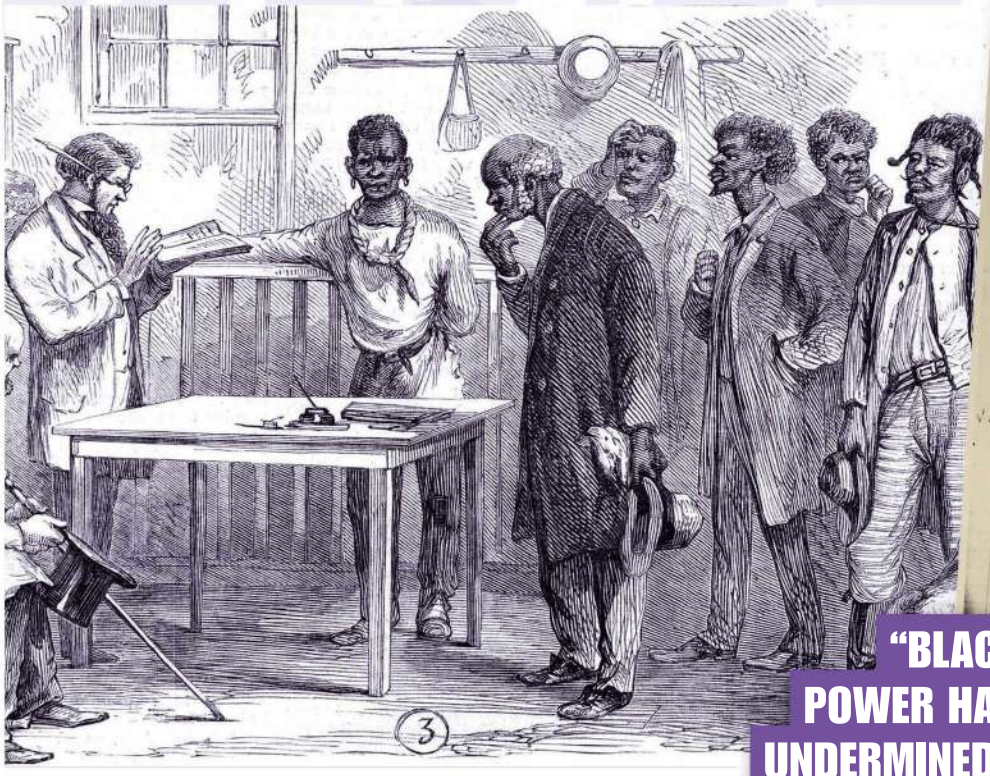
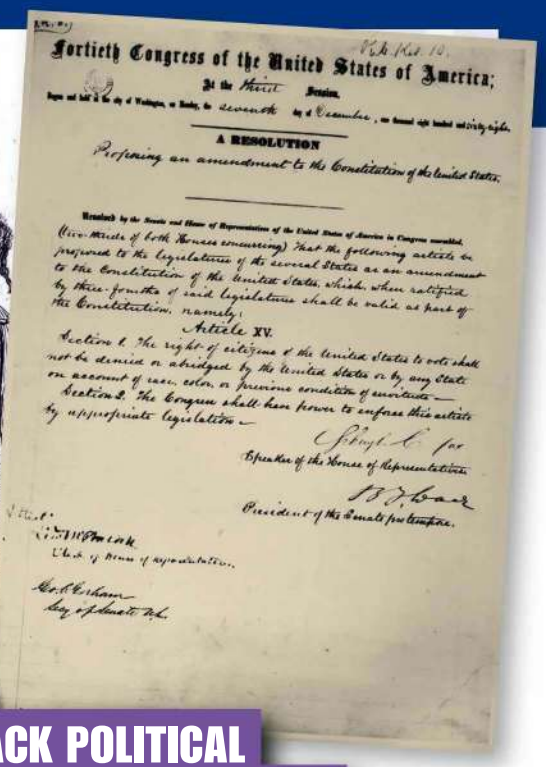
However, they faced numerous obstacles. One of these challenges came in the form of exploitative laws, such as the black codes, which severely limited the rights of black people and prevented them from achieving political and economic autonomy. Additionally, white vigilante terrorism, exemplified by the emergence of the first Ku Klux Klan, founded in 1865 by former Confederate soldiers, posed a grave threat to black families and their homes. Such acts of violence and intimidation were intended to strip black people of their independence and reaffirm that their freedom did not grant them authority over themselves, their homes, or their families.

The struggle for authority over black people and the meaning of black life continued to unfold over the decades that followed and throughout the next century. It was a complex battle, with progress being made at times, but also setbacks and challenges to overcome.




Fortieth Congress of the United States of America;
A RESOLUTION
Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.
Article XV.
Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.
Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

"BLACK POLITICAL POWER HAD BEEN SEVERELY UNDERMINED BY THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY"

ABOVE: **An 1867 illustration showing newly freed black men registering to vote in Georgia following the end of the Civil War**

ABOVE RIGHT: **The 1868 Congressional Resolution proposing the 15th Amendment, which, in 1870, finally established universal manhood suffrage**

Q: What role did the Mississippi Plan play in reversing black freedoms at the end of Reconstruction?

A: In 1870, the 15th Amendment was ratified, guaranteeing black men the right to vote, thereby establishing universal manhood suffrage. However, as we know, laws can sometimes have workarounds, especially when coordinated efforts are made to undermine them, and in 1890, the Mississippi state legislature came up with a way of pushing African-Americans out of the public sphere while not violating the 15th Amendment.

Rather than banning black voters outright, they implemented tactics that made it harder for poor southerners, especially black southerners, to vote. This included the introduction of a poll tax, which required people to pay a certain amount of money to get on the electoral register. Additionally, literacy tests were set up, which allowed the white person administering the test to subjectively determine whether an African-American had passed it or not. Another method employed was the creation of a grandfather clause, which stated that a person could only vote if their grandfather had been a voter in that particular county. Unfortunately, for most African-Americans in the 1890s, their grandparents had largely been enslaved, which rendered them ineligible to vote under this provision.

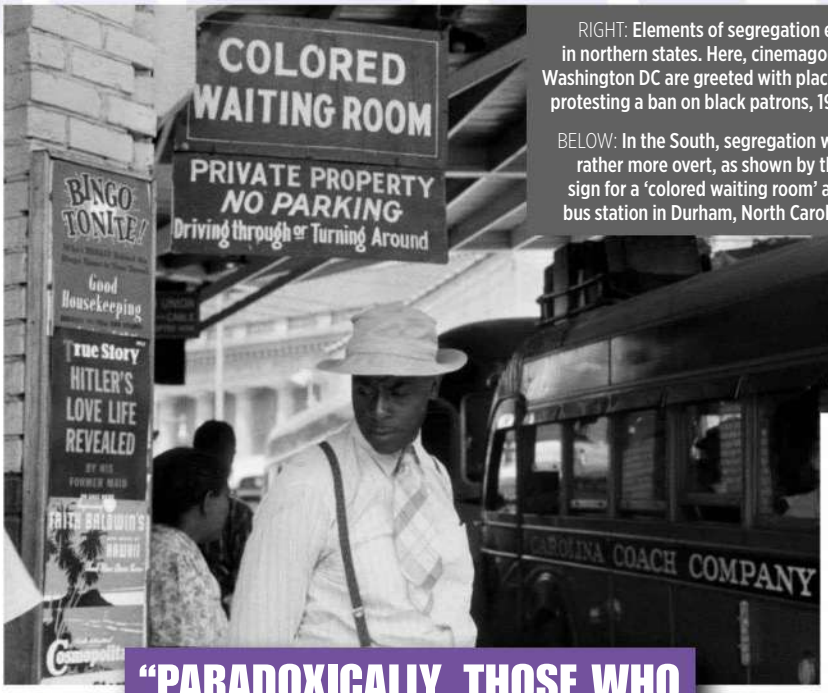
The effectiveness of the Mississippi Plan saw a number of other southern states adopt similar tactics, and by the early 1900s, the majority of African-American people in most former Confederate states had been disfranchised. While there were still some pockets of African-American political presence, especially in urban centres, overall, black political power had been severely undermined by the beginning of the 20th century.

Protesters in Washington DC call on the government to take action against lynch mobs, 1934. By then, the horrific killings had been taking place for decades

The implementation of segregation laws during this period are often viewed as a separate phenomenon from the racial terror of this era, but their enforcement spurred an increase in lynching. These were not the clandestine under-cover-of-darkness attacks that would later be associated with cases like Emmett Till (*see page 28*). Rather, they were horrific public spectacles that resembled carnivals or county fairs. Such events were sometimes advertised in advance, drawing large crowds who would gather, sing hymns, sell lemonade, and even take pieces of the victims' bodies as macabre souvenirs. It's a period that was characterised by gruesome displays of white supremacy, which not only instilled fear in black communities, terrorising them out of trying to save their vote, but also marked the triumph of racial oppression.

Q: When does the doctrine of 'separate but equal' come into play in the US?

A: The doctrine of 'separate but equal' was introduced during the late 19th century, primarily as a result of the Supreme Court's ruling in the landmark case of Plessy vs Ferguson in 1896, which ruled that segregation was constitutional so long as the separate facilities ▶



RIGHT: **Elements of segregation existed in northern states. Here, cinemagoers in Washington DC are greeted with placards protesting a ban on black patrons, 1940**

BELOW: **In the South, segregation was rather more overt, as shown by this sign for a 'colored waiting room' at a bus station in Durham, North Carolina**

"PARADOXICALLY, THOSE WHO VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED BLACK PEOPLE IN CERTAIN SPACES RELIED ON THEM FOR DOMESTIC LABOUR"

CENTRE: **An African-American woman serves dinner, Virginia, c1899. Black and white people still interacted in certain contexts, even when segregation was enshrined in law**

BOTTOM: **A Chicago Baptist congregation meets for an Easter service, 1941. Black churches would emerge as vital places for political expression**

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provided were deemed equal. This ruling effectively enshrined the principle of 'separate but equal' into American law. It's worth noting, though, that segregation was not solely a southern phenomenon or limited to Jim Crow laws. It existed in various parts of the United States, including urban areas, often in the form of customary practices and traditions.

However, the move to legally codify segregation and make it the norm gained momentum after Reconstruction. With the advent of railroads and the increasing popularity of mass travel, there was a simultaneous push to segregate transportation. This gave rise to resistance, sit-ins, and boycotts, even before the large-scale mid-century boycotts that we often associate with the Civil Rights Movement.

Alongside the legal developments, there were instances of mass violence and racially motivated riots, predominantly led by white mobs, throughout the latter half of the 19th century. The most brazen of these, in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898, was met with inaction by President William McKinley [who served 1897–1901]. The government, which had played a role in safeguarding the civil rights of African-Americans during Reconstruction, now appeared to withdraw from actively promoting meaningful citizenship for its citizens.

Q: What was life like for African-Americans in early 20th-century Jim Crow America?

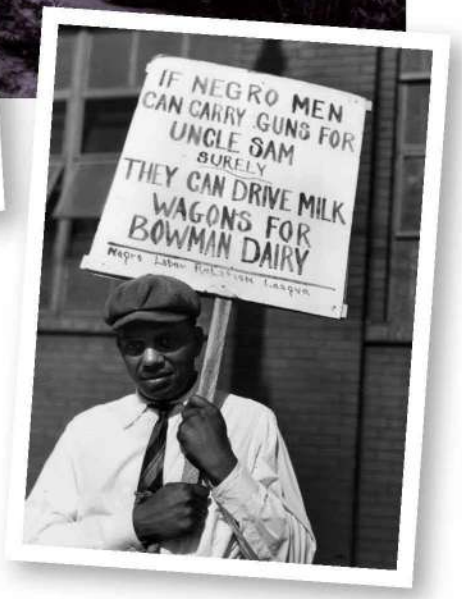
A: It varied depending on where you lived. In many southern areas, segregation was enshrined in law, but it didn't always mean complete separation. Paradoxically, those who vehemently opposed black people in certain spaces relied on them for domestic labour, such as cooking and childcare.

In urban spaces, there could be more physical separation due to neighbourhood structures. However, a common thread throughout Jim Crow America was the disempowerment of African-Americans, limiting their ability to advocate for themselves. Despite being nominal citizens, they often relied on the goodwill of others to accomplish even basic tasks, although they often found ingenious ways to navigate and overcome these challenges.

Black political life shifted to alternative spaces where collective action could thrive. The black church emerged as a vital space for political expression and organisation, while black schools not only provided education but also passed down counter-narratives that challenged the derogatory claims made about black people elsewhere.

Living under Jim Crow required knowing how to navigate customs and etiquette, and learning to present a compliant face while preserving a sense of self behind what poet and novelist Paul Laurence Dunbar called "the mask". It was a delicate balance between compliance and maintaining an inner understanding of one's identity, often hidden from view.

When discussing the African-American experience during Jim Crow, it is crucial to convey the hideousness and brutality of the system, the traumas endured, and the generational impact of intense exploitation and dehumanisation.



However, it is equally important to recognise the resilience, determination and creativity of black people who, despite the dehumanising environment, expressed their humanity, created beauty, and envisioned a better future. The story of black life under Jim Crow is not solely one of suffering but is also a testament to the remarkable capacity to endure, resist, and ultimately lay the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement that would emerge later in the 20th century.

Q: How far back can we trace the black freedom struggle?

A: I would say that there has been a black freedom struggle in the Americas since there have been black people in the Americas. As soon as the notion arose that black people could be 'owned' and that this ownership might be a denial of their humanity, a resistance to this injustice emerged.

A pivotal moment, without which we would not have had a mid-century Civil Rights Movement, was the Great Migration [1910–70], which saw millions of black Americans leave the South, initially heading North and, in later years, West. The black newspaper *The Chicago Defender* played a major part in inspiring this migration, proclaiming that it was better to die in a northern winter than to face a southern mob.

Additionally, the establishment of organisations played a crucial role. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded in 1909 in response to a race riot in the city of Springfield, Illinois, was a significant milestone in the fight for civil rights.

The 20th century witnessed the unfolding, intensification and empowerment of the black freedom struggle. The Great Migration and the Great War provided new fronts for civil rights activists. However, the so-called 'Red Summer' of 1919, characterised by waves of racist violence, highlighted white Americans' opposition to a 'war for democracy' at home. Nevertheless, the struggle persisted, with renewed determination from the veterans of World War I to ensure that World War II would bring about greater change, which it ultimately did.

Indeed, World War II was a significant moment in the black freedom struggle, and acted as a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement. African-Americans experienced a mass mobilisation involving not just soldiers, but also the families, churches and communities who supported them. These veterans returned with first-hand experiences of fighting fascism abroad while enduring systemic oppression and discrimination at home. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, a prominent black newspaper, coined the phrase 'double victory' to emphasise the absurdity and hypocrisy of upholding racial inequality after such a monumental war.

Returning soldiers and mobilised civilians expanded and invigorated the freedom struggle in the postwar years, predominantly through peaceful means but with an eye to self-defence. The landmark Brown vs Board of Education decision and the Montgomery bus boycott also emerged from this period of postwar activism.

The question of where people, regardless of race or ethnicity, would stand in response to this struggle became increasingly important. The fight for black freedom called on all Americans to consider their position and take a stand against injustice.

INTERVIEW: RHIANNON DAVIES

TOP: **Around six million black Americans moved from the South to other parts of the US between 1910 and 1970**

ABOVE: **A band of white supremacists violently overthrew the multi-racial government of Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898**

RIGHT: **A man in Chicago takes part in a protest against racist employment practices during World War II**

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ADRIANE LENTZ-SMITH is associate professor of history at Duke University, North Carolina. A scholar of African-American history as well as 20th-century America, her works include *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Harvard University Press, 2009)

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PODCAST SERIES

Professor Adriane Lentz-Smith is one of several civil rights experts to appear on our new podcast series, *US Civil Rights: Fighting for Freedom*. Stream all six episodes now at *historyextra.com/civilrightspodcast*

13 MOMENTS THAT SHAPED A MOVEMENT

Discover the stories behind the seismic events that came to define the long battle for civil rights in the US

BROWN VS BOARD OF EDUCATION RULING, 17 MAY 1954

In the 1950s, America was a place of deep division. Racism reigned supreme, with the Deep South having legalised racial segregation through the Jim Crow laws. Since the late 19th century, the southern states had clung to the mantra of "separate but equal" – and when it came to separating facilities for black and white Americans, they excelled.

Every aspect of life – from what schools children could attend, to what water fountains people could drink from – was separated by race. In Florida, for instance, black and white children's textbooks couldn't even be kept in the same building. But making facilities "equal" proved less of a priority. Schools reserved for black children were typically much worse than those attended by their white counterparts, with shoestring budgets and overcrowded classrooms.

However, in 1954 the US Supreme Court transformed the situation. After hearing about Linda Brown, a black girl who couldn't enrol at her local school in Kansas because of segregationist policies (as well as hearing other cases concerning school segregation), the court unanimously ruled that separating public schools on the basis of race was unconstitutional.

Although this landmark ruling was followed up the next year by a second act that muddied the waters – in 1955, Brown vs Board of Education II told schools to integrate with "all deliberate speed", which many southern institutions used as an excuse to stall their desegregation efforts – Brown vs Board of Education is still seen as a crucial moment in the early Civil Rights Movement. After all, if segregation was unconstitutional in the classroom, why was it permissible anywhere else?

A photograph of the children involved in the Brown vs Board of Education lawsuit, including Linda Brown (*third from left*), after whom it was named

Emmett Till pictured with his mother, Mamie. The teenager's lynching sparked anger across the world

THE LYNCHING OF EMMETT TILL, AUGUST 1955

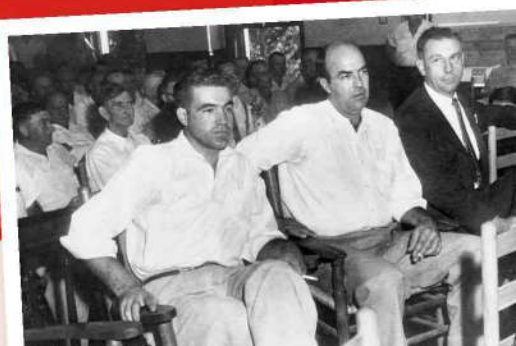
Emmett Till – a 14-year-old black teenager from Chicago – was a fish out of water when he visited his family in rural Mississippi in the summer of 1955. Unschooled in the ways of the South, his interaction with a local white woman called Carolyn Bryant put a target on his back.

It's still unknown exactly what transpired between them, as eyewitness accounts vary wildly. But whatever took place, it resulted in two men – Carolyn's husband Roy Bryant, and his half-brother JW Milam – driving to where Emmett was staying in the middle of the night and dragging him away.

They took him to a remote plantation shed, where they tortured and shot him. His mutilated body was dumped in a nearby river, and didn't surface until three days later.

Emmett's mother, Mamie, was horrified by her son's fate. But she was determined to show the world what had happened to him, and insisted on an open funeral casket. Tens of thousands filed past his body, and photographs of his destroyed face were published by the press.

Outrage grew around the world – but there was still a glimmer of hope that his attackers would be brought to justice, as Bryant and Milam were put on trial for murdering the teenager. An all-white jury declared them innocent within 67 minutes.



Half-brothers Roy Bryant (*left*) and JW Milam (*centre*) were both acquitted of Till's kidnapping and murder by an all-white jury

GETTY IMAGES X6, ALAMY X2

THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT BEGINS, 5 DECEMBER 1955

Almost four months after Emmett Till's lynching, a 42-year-old black woman named Rosa Parks boarded the bus home after a long shift at work. She recognised the driver, James Blake, as she paid for her ticket – she had been an activist for years, and Blake had thrown her off a bus previously for refusing to comply with prejudiced boarding rules.

That evening, Parks found a seat on the front row of the "colored section". When a white passenger got on and found that the front half of the bus – reserved exclusively for white passengers – was full, Blake asked Parks and the three other black passengers on the row to offer up their seats. The others complied, but Parks refused.

In the end, Parks eventually left the bus in handcuffs. Word of her arrest soon spread, reaching a local activist group called the Woman's Political Council. That night, the Council's leader, Jo Ann Robinson, travelled to the college where she worked. Creeping across campus, she printed out 35,000 leaflets calling for a bus boycott on 5 December.

That day the buses were noticeably emptier than usual: 90 per cent of black Americans who usually travelled by bus chose to walk instead. In the face of such success, the boycott was extended indefinitely.

It proved a marathon of endurance. Led by a new committee called the Montgomery Improvement Association – which catapulted an inspirational young preacher, Martin Luther King Jr, to fame – the protesters formed the ultimate carpool, which gave as many as 1,500 lifts a day. They never gave in. On 21 December 1956, 381 days after the boycott started, the city's buses were formally desegregated.

ABOVE: **Rosa Parks pictured sitting on one of Montgomery's public buses on 21 December 1956 – the day that they became legally desegregated**

TOP RIGHT: **Thousands of Montgomery's black residents walked to work in support of the 381-day-long bus boycott started by Parks**

ABOVE: **Elizabeth Eckford walks to school on 4 September 1957, defiantly ignoring the torrents of racial abuse from the white protesters around her**

RIGHT: **Eckford pictured alongside the eight other black students to enrol at Central High School that year**

THE LITTLE ROCK NINE DESEGREGATE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, SEPTEMBER 1957

After Brown vs Board of Education, Arkansas began the process of integrating the state's schools. One of the first to open its doors to both black and white pupils was the formerly all-white Central High School, in the town of Little Rock. Only nine black students actually transferred – they'd had to pass a vetting process organised by the Arkansas branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. But that was nothing compared to the hell that waited for them outside the school gates.

On 4 September 1957, Elizabeth Eckford – one of the so-called Little Rock Nine – arrived alone at the school. According to historian Professor Rebecca Brueckmann: "Eckford was set upon by hundreds of white segregationist rioters who spat at her, shoved her and called for her lynching." The Arkansas National Guard were also in attendance, and prevented the nine students from entering the building.

Photographs of the abuse the students faced circulated around the globe, drawing widespread condemnation – especially from the Soviet Union, which seized upon the Civil Rights Movement as ammunition during the Cold War.

On 23 September, President Dwight D Eisenhower himself stepped in and sent troops to protect the students. With their new guards, the Little Rock Nine could now step inside the building – but the harassment continued. Minnijean Brown was expelled for eventually responding to the bullies, calling a classmate "white trash". The other eight students managed to last the school year, though, and Ernest Green became the first to don the graduate cap and gown in May 1958.

STUDENTS STAGE A SIT-IN AT GREENSBORO, 1 FEBRUARY 1960

On 1 February 1960, four well-dressed black college students walked into a Woolworth's store in Greensboro, North Carolina. After some light shopping, they sat down at the lunch counter, waiting to be served.

At the time, Woolworth's didn't allow black customers to use their lunch counters. Historian Professor Mia Bay says: "This was something that African-Americans had resented for many years. There was something really humiliating about being able to spend your money in a retail establishment, but not being permitted to use the restrooms or eat at the lunch counter. So the students who organised the sit-ins decided they would do something about it."

That day, the students sat patiently and waited for service that never came. Instead, the manager arrived and asked them to leave. But the next day they returned, with more protesters in tow: this time 24 black students sat quietly at the lunch counter. The sit-in ballooned at an astonishing rate, with 1,400 coming to the store that weekend.

The sit-ins triggered a wave of aggression: white supremacists loomed over the protesters, spitting and throwing eggs at them. But despite this response, sit-ins soon spread across the nation, with students as far north as Wisconsin staging them. And they proved effective: on 25 July 1960, Woolworth's opened its lunch counters to all customers.

Around 1,400 black students ended up participating in the Greensboro Woolworth's lunch counter protests

THE FREEDOM RIDERS SET OUT, 4 MAY 1961

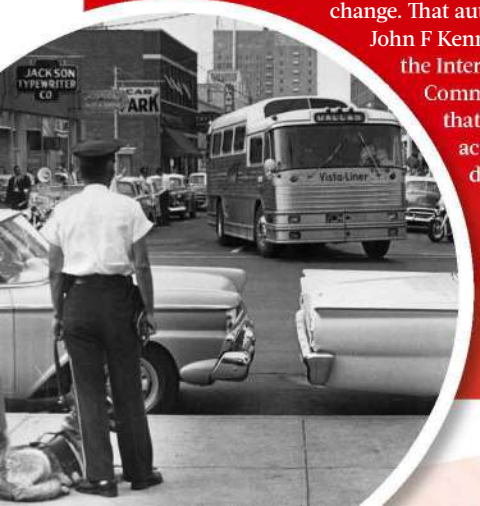
Although travelling by bus might not sound like a great act of protest, for the Freedom Riders it certainly was. This interracial group from the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) were trying to find out whether interstate bus terminals were actually integrated in the Deep South, as they were legally meant to be.

Starting their journey in Washington DC, the riders planned to travel all the way down to New Orleans on two buses. But as the vehicles burrowed down into the South, violence began to mount.

When one of the buses rolled into Anniston, Alabama, a white mob surrounded it and lobbed a bomb inside. The vehicle erupted in a fireball, and the fleeing riders were savagely beaten. The driver refused to continue the journey, and a replacement had to be found.

When the riders finally arrived in Jackson, Mississippi, on 24 May 1961, those who attempted to use whites-only facilities were arrested. But it wasn't over: hundreds of protesters flooded into the area, ready to join the cause.

Although the Freedom Riders never reached New Orleans, they still brought about lasting change. That autumn, President John F Kennedy worked with the Interstate Commerce Commission to ensure that the law would actually be followed down to the letter.



A Jackson police officer stands ready to arrest members of the Freedom Riders as their bus rolls in

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE IS LAUNCHED, MAY 1963

During the Montgomery bus boycott, Martin Luther King Jr had captured the nation's attention, even gracing the cover of *Time* magazine. But he wasn't done yet. In 1963, King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (a group that he had helped establish) decided to launch a major campaign in Birmingham, one of the largest cities in Alabama. Known as "Bombingham", it was a hotbed of white supremacy.

While Montgomery had been a success from the start, the Birmingham campaign didn't get off the ground as easily. They needed something that would grab the media's attention: and in the spring of 1963, such a moment arrived. On 2 May, more than a thousand black children – some as young as seven – played truant from school to protest. Holding handmade signs and chanting freedom songs, they linked arms as they marched through the streets.

This peaceful protest was shattered by the city's commissioner, Bull Connor. Following his orders, the police arrested hundreds of children, bundling them into school buses to transport them to jail. When the demonstrations continued, the resistance ramped up. Firefighters soaked children with water hoses, and police dogs were set on the crowd.

Photographs of the violent suppression shocked America, and the rest of the world. While the daring stunt helped publicise the movement, some activists condemned the decision to send children to the frontlines of protests, with Malcolm X branding it as cowardly.

THIS IMAGE: Birmingham firemen hose down young protesters on the sidewalk

RIGHT: A police officer lets his dog attack one of the activists

GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X3

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON, 28 AUGUST 1963

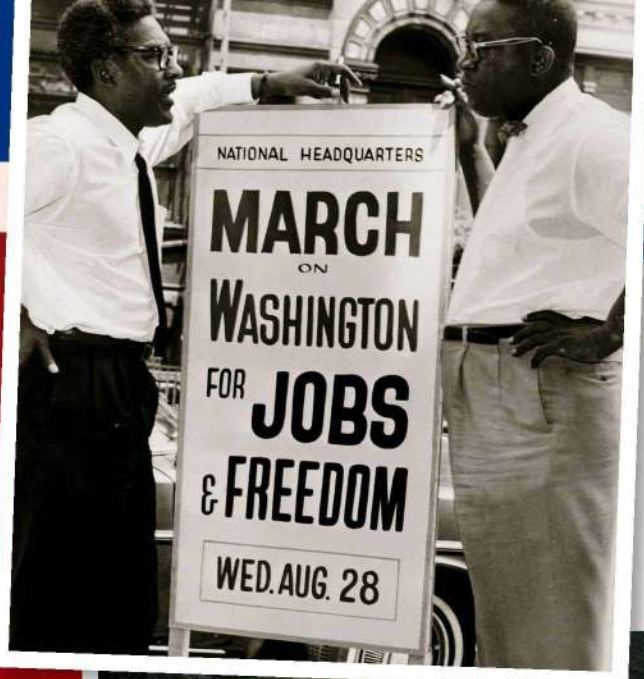
On 28 August 1963, more than 250,000 people descended on the capital to take part in the biggest civil rights march ever staged in America. Designed to pressure President John F Kennedy into passing the civil rights legislation he had long been promising, the March for Jobs and Freedom was the brainchild of veteran labour organiser A Philip Randolph and Martin Luther King Jr.

Some have said the atmosphere was similar to a picnic: black and white activists were in attendance, with many bringing their families with them. People sang protest anthems like 'We Shall Overcome' and swayed as they listened to singers such as Bob Dylan.

Of course, activist speakers were also there to galvanise the crowd, taking to the podium throughout the day. The speech that is remembered best was the final one of the night, and it was delivered by Martin Luther King Jr.

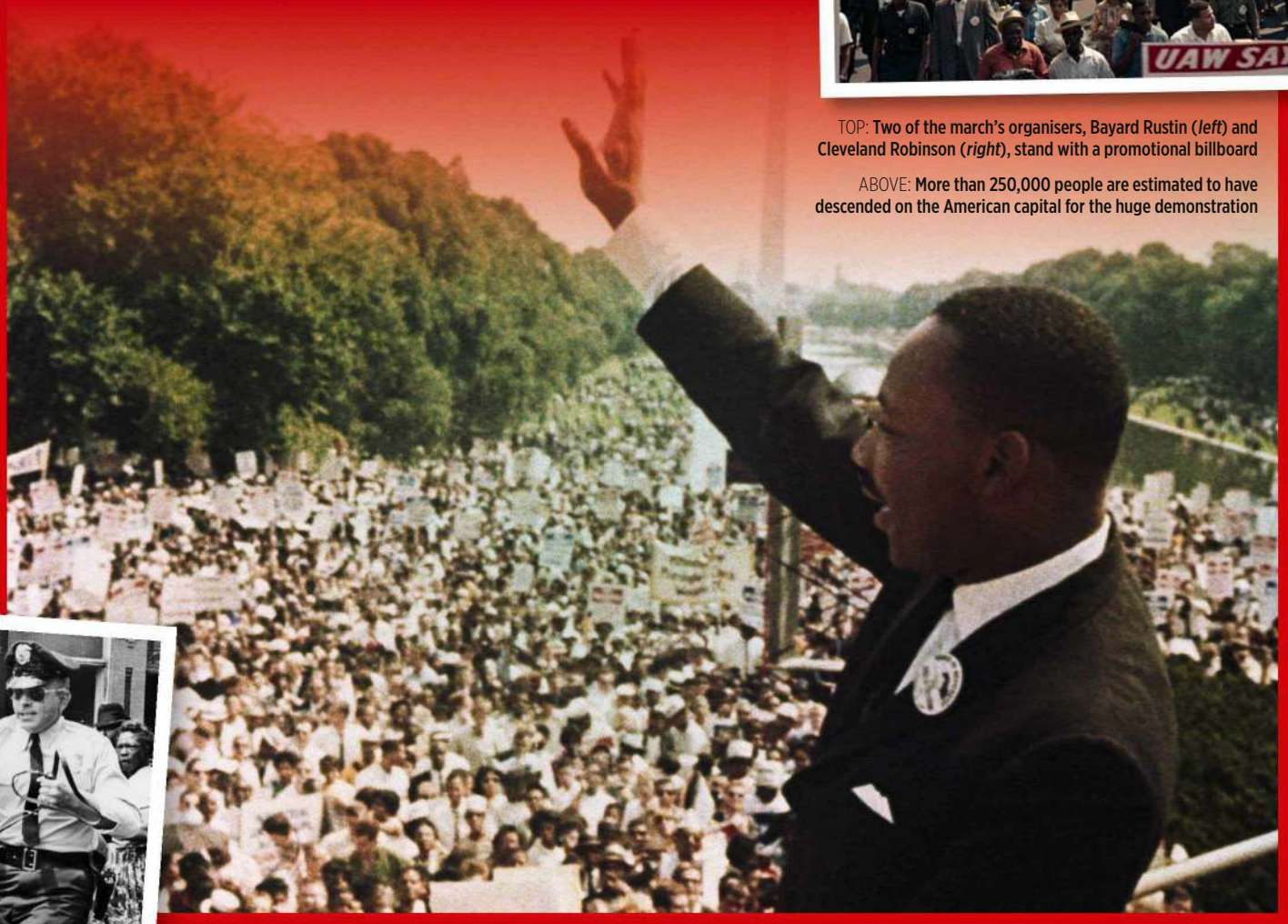
Speaking for around 16 minutes, King had initially planned to give a speech that referenced Lincoln's famous 1863 Gettysburg Address. But after encouraging the crowd and the TV cameras to return to the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, he then went off-script.

In this second, unplanned part of the speech, King laid out his dream for America. He confessed to the crowd: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character." This captured the nation's imagination, and is now seen as one of the greatest speeches of all time.



TOP: **Two of the march's organisers, Bayard Rustin (*left*) and Cleveland Robinson (*right*), stand with a promotional billboard**

ABOVE: **More than 250,000 people are estimated to have descended on the American capital for the huge demonstration**



King waves to the marchers in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial. The iconic 'I Have a Dream' section of his address was actually improvised on the spot

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT IS PASSED, 2 JULY 1964

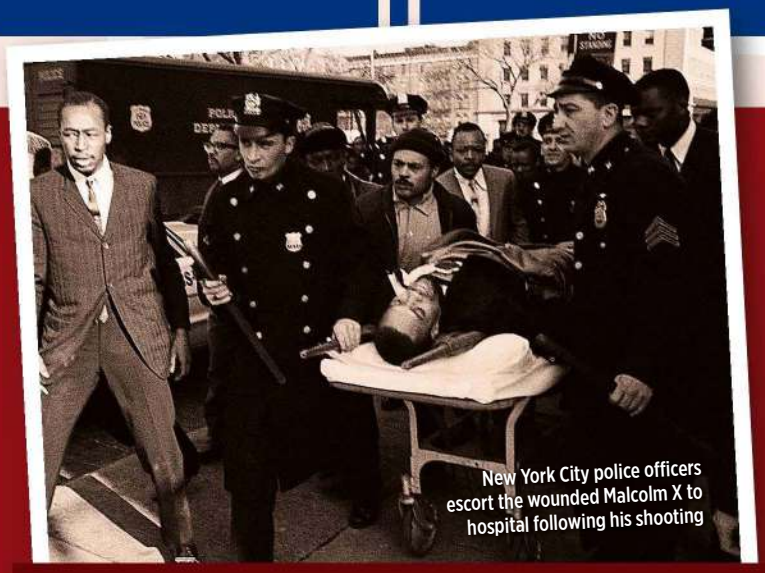
The atmosphere in the White House on 2 July 1964 was electric. Civil rights leaders, prominent politicians and the press had all gathered to witness history in the making: President Lyndon B Johnson was signing the landmark Civil Rights Act into being.

This act had been a long time in the making. Civil rights legislation had originally been promised by Johnson's predecessor, John F Kennedy, but it was staunchly resisted by many southern senators. In the wake of Kennedy's shock assassination in 1963, Lyndon had vowed to pass the act – it was, he argued, the proper way of honouring the late president's memory.

According to legal historian Professor Tomiko Brown-Nagin, the act was seen by many activists as "a great triumph". It was the most robust piece of civil rights legislation in a century, promising to sweep away discrimination in many areas of American society, from schools and housing to restaurants and water fountains.

While the act was lauded for its broad scope, it did have some limitations. Brown-Nagin says: "It did not address the material needs of black Americans, and the deprivation that had been wrought by the system of segregation – and indeed by slavery. There was great poverty, and this Civil Rights Act said nothing about any of that."

King shakes President Lyndon B Johnson's hand at the signing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964



New York City police officers escort the wounded Malcolm X to hospital following his shooting

MALCOLM X IS ASSASSINATED, 21 FEBRUARY 1965

When Malcolm X walked onto the stage of the Audubon Ballroom in Washington Heights, New York City, a murmur rippled through the expectant crowd. Around 400 people had squeezed into the space, including his wife, Betty, and their four children, to hear about Malcolm's new political group, the Organisation of Afro-American Unity.

But before he could get past his opening remarks, a bang went off and the room filled with smoke. The audience members began to scream. In the confusion, three armed men rushed to the stage and unleashed a barrage of bullets onto the unsuspecting Malcolm X. He was dead within 15 minutes.

Malcolm X had been slain by members of his former group, the Nation of Islam (NOI). This group believed that black Americans were Allah's chosen people, and wanted to build a separate society for black people that was free from the interference of the "white devils".

The NOI was part of a long tradition of black nationalism that had existed in America since the time of slavery. In the 1960s and 70s, this ideology surged in popularity once more, as many grew disillusioned with the Civil Rights Movement. Malcolm X was partly responsible: a skilled communicator, he had helped NOI membership soar, and his writings also inspired the formation of groups like the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

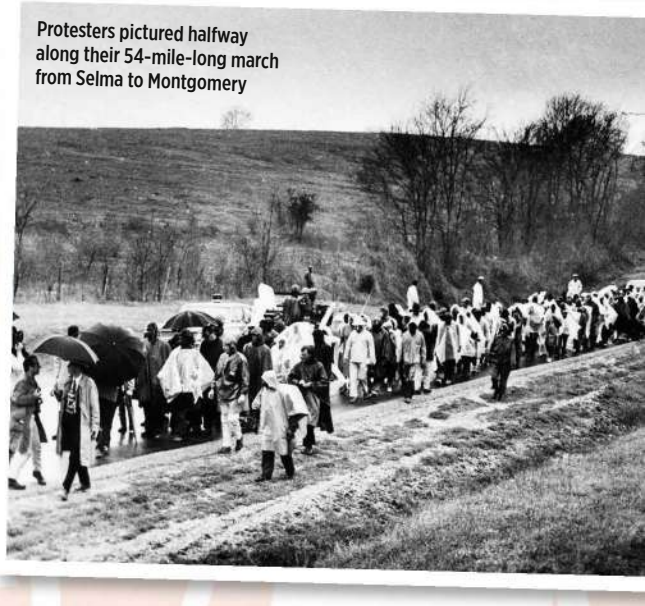
THE SELMA MARCH TAKES PLACE, MARCH 1965

In the wake of the Civil Rights Act, it was clear that there was one area in which the legislation had fallen woefully short: voting rights. Southern states were still using a range of underhanded tactics to keep black voters away, from literacy tests to poll taxes.

Activists were keenly aware of this, and one of the battlegrounds was Selma, Alabama, where black voter numbers were dismally low. To force the government's hand over the issue, King organised his last great civil rights march. Protesters were set to walk from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama's capital. It was meant to be peaceful – but white supremacists had other plans.

On Sunday 7 March 1965, around 600 activists gathered in Selma, ready to march. But they didn't even leave the town's limits before running into a squadron of state troopers and police, who unleashed an assault so brutal it's now known as 'Bloody Sunday'. The attack was captured on camera, and it shocked the nation.

After a second failed attempt – again ended prematurely by state authorities – it wasn't until 21 March that the marchers could actually leave the town. This time they had federal protection on their side. Five days later, thousands clambered up the marble steps of the grand Alabama State Capitol building in Montgomery. The moment was especially sweet: by this time, their dream for new voting rights legislation was mere months away from coming true.



Protesters pictured halfway along their 54-mile-long march from Selma to Montgomery

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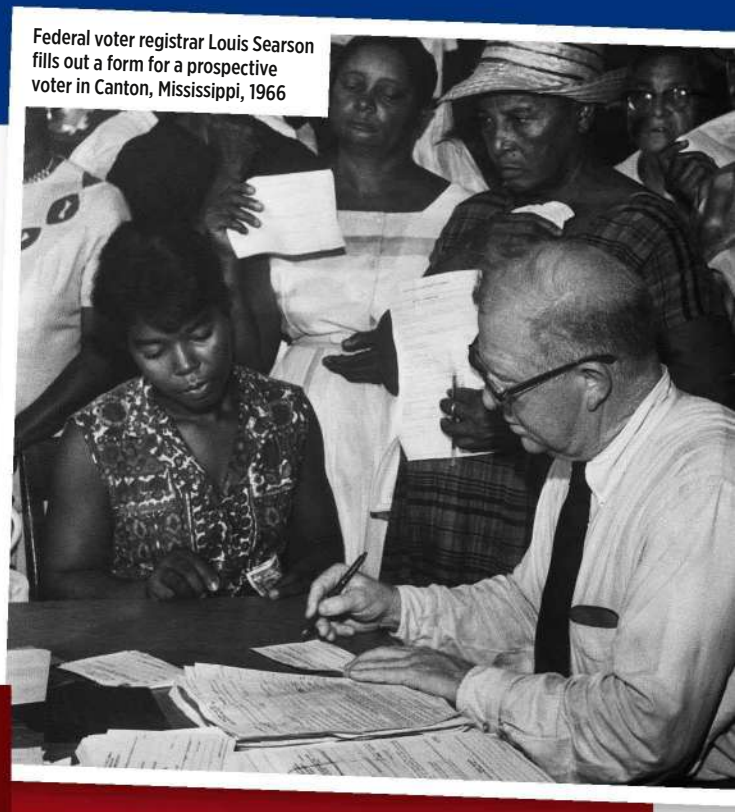


Federal voter registrar Louis Searson fills out a form for a prospective voter in Canton, Mississippi, 1966

THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT IS SIGNED, 6 AUGUST 1965

After the brutality of Selma was exposed on the world stage, Lyndon B Johnson was spurred into action over voting rights. By 15 March – just eight days after Bloody Sunday – Congress were debating the Voting Rights Act. Almost five months later, on 6 August 1965, Johnson signed it into law.

The law bolstered protections of all Americans' voting rights. It made literacy tests a thing of the past, and also gave federal examiners the power to step in and act in any situations where the law was being ignored. Professor Tomiko Brown-Nagin describes it as an act "designed to make non-discrimination in politics a reality", by finally doing "the unfinished business" of the Civil Rights Act and earlier legislation.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR IS ASSASSINATED, 4 APRIL 1968

Martin Luther King Jr had lived with the spectre of death for years. According to author Jonathan Eig: "When King saw Malcolm X assassinated, he thought: 'This is what's going to happen to me. This is what happens to leaders. This is what happens to people who challenge the status quo.'"

King faced threats from all sides, from fellow activists all the way up to the FBI. The organisation's director, J Edgar Hoover, was suspicious of King, and mounted a huge surveillance campaign against him. But the shot that killed him didn't come from the FBI, but from a career criminal called James Earl Ray.

On 4 April 1968, as King relaxed on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, a sniper's bullet whizzed through the air and buried itself in his neck. The civil rights leader's death sent the nation into a tailspin. A national day of mourning was declared, and riots spread across the country.

Seven days after his passing, the last key piece of legislation of the civil rights period – the Fair Housing Act of 1968 – was hastily signed into law. Prior to his death, King had been campaigning against poverty in employment and housing in the north, and this act – which was designed to outlaw discrimination in housing – became part of his powerful legacy.

WORDS: RHIANNON DAVIES

LEFT: **King pictured with fellow civil rights leaders in Memphis the day before his assassination**

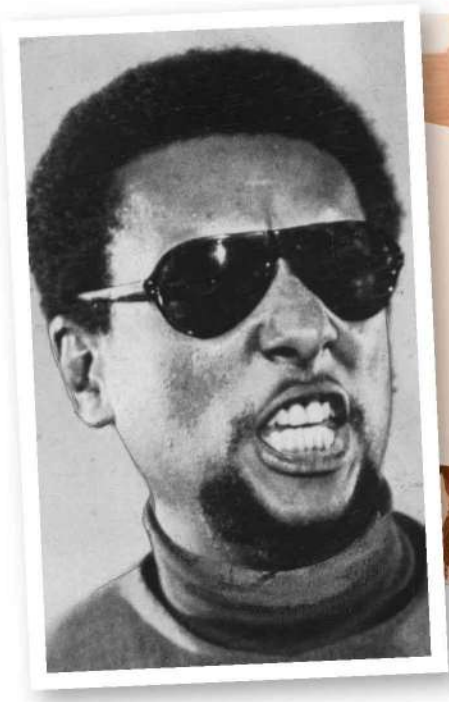
BELOW LEFT: **Mourners file past King's open casket ahead of his funeral service in Atlanta**

BELOW RIGHT: **King's widow, Coretta, and his youngest daughter, Bernice, attend the funeral service**

THE CALL OF THE PANTHERS

When a young black activist rose to speak at a Mississippi rally in June 1966, his words lit the touchpaper of a powerful new political force

Olympians Tommie Smith (*centre*) and John Carlos (*right*) show their support for the Black Power movement in 1968



ABOVE: **Activists in Chicago march with a Black Power banner in July 1966 – weeks after Stokely Carmichael's incendiary speech**

LEFT: **Carmichael would later be made 'honorary prime minister' of the Black Panther Party**

It was 16 June 1966. A young activist named Stokely Carmichael walked out of jail, headed to a political rally in Greenwood, Mississippi, and stood at a podium. What he did next changed the course of US history. "We been saying freedom for six years and we ain't got nothin," Carmichael declared to an audience of around 1,500 people. "What we got to start saying now is Black Power! We want Black Power!"

With these words, Carmichael signalled the opening of a new chapter in the Civil Rights Movement. Since the early 1960s, the campaign for racial equality in the US had largely followed an integrationist, nonviolent pathway in which figures such as Martin Luther King Jr envisaged a future in which black and white Americans came together in one nation.

What Stokely Carmichael was advocating in June 1966 was different. He was calling for something more assertive, more combative, less emollient. He was issuing a rallying call for Black Power.

So what is Black Power? According to Ashley Farmer, an associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin, at the movement's heart lies a thirst for autonomy and self-determination. "This means the right to decide for oneself or one's community how one should live; race pride – the idea that blackness is inherently beautiful; and self-defence – both against harmful stereotypes, and against unwelcome intrusions into one's community," she says.

AN ALLURING IDEOLOGY

Carmichael wasn't the first activist to voice such aspirations. A thirst for black power had existed since Africans had been brought to America as slaves and had been propelled into the national conversation by Malcolm X, before his assassination in 1965. Yet it was only after Carmichael's speech that white Americans realised the extent of Black Power's popularity.

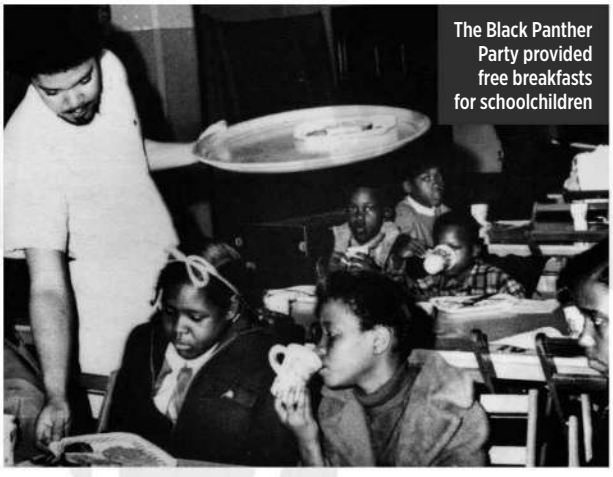
As to why it proved such an alluring ideology to so many people, that was largely due to the perceived limitations of the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Act in July 1964, and the Voting Rights Act that followed in 1965, had marked significant legislative landmarks. But in the eyes of many black people they had failed to deliver an end to inequality and discrimination.

"Even with the intervention of federal legislation, we still had lower job rates, segregated housing and daily racial discrimination," says Farmer. "So people turned towards a more militant and separatist form of organising with the understanding that appealing to the government always for these rights, in appealing to our white counterparts for these rights, was not always going to get us where we needed to be."

Two men who ascribed to this more militant and separatist approach were Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. The pair had been inspired by Stokely Carmichael's speech of June 1966 and in October that year attempted to put his vision into action in the guise of the Black Panther Party.

Established in Oakland, California, the Black Panther Party soon morphed into a national – even international – Marxist revolutionary group defined by a 10-point plan that called for the end of police brutality, freedom for all oppressed people, and the exemption of black men from military service.

Also integral to the party, says Farmer, was the creation of a social safety net for black people across the nation. "It ran free shoe programmes, free health clinics, churches, schools and ambulances, because ambulances wouldn't come to



The Black Panther Party provided free breakfasts for schoolchildren

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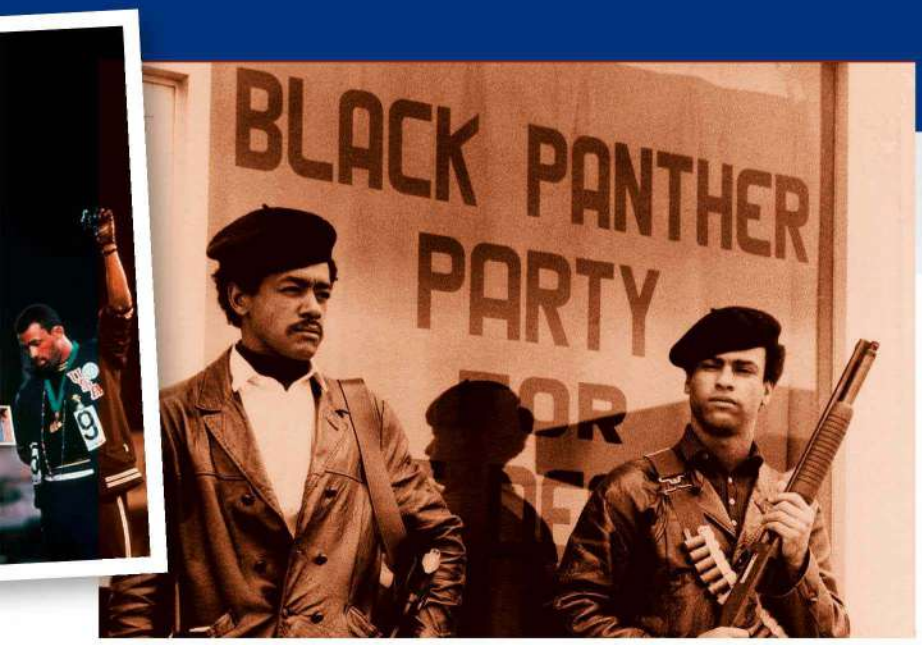


Bobby Seale (*left*) and Huey Newton (*right*) founded the Black Panther Party in October 1966, armed with a 10-point plan that set out the guiding principles and beliefs of their radical political movement

Martin Luther King Jr, seen in the centre of this image with Stokely Carmichael, far right, would come to disagree with Black Power's approach

"BY THE MID-1970s, FBI TACTICS HAD DRAWN THE STING OUT OF THE MOVEMENT"

black neighbourhoods... And perhaps most well-known was their free breakfast programme, in which they fed kids before they went to school."

Programmes such as this won the cause of Black Power many admirers – and, in 1968, that cause made its mark on the global stage when athletes John Carlos and Tommie Smith raised black-fisted gloves in the air on the medal podium at the Mexico City Olympics.

SUSPICION AND FEAR

But not everyone was impressed. Stokely Carmichael had delivered his famous Black Power speech at the March Against Fear, a protest that had not only seen him arrested for trespassing but also walking alongside Martin Luther King Jr.

Yet King came to believe that Black Power marked an unwise turn, declaring in a 1967 speech: "Let us be dissatisfied until that day when nobody will shout 'White Power' – when nobody will shout 'Black Power!' – but everybody will talk about God's power and human power."

As for white Americans, many reacted to Black Power's more combative, defiant image – its refusal to discount the use of violence – with suspicion and fear. It wasn't long before Black Power activists were targeted by the FBI. By the mid-1970s, tactics such as spying, wiretapping and even assassination had drawn the sting out of the movement.

Yet, says Farmer, its legacy lives on. "The idea that people from those communities should be able to represent themselves politically, socially, culturally is something that very much endures from the Black Power era," she says.

WORDS: SPENCER MIZEN

FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE

Women, as well as men, helped grow the nascent Black Power Movement

Ask someone to describe a Black Power activist and what image will they conjure? It might involve combat boots, a black beret and a black leather jacket. That person may brandish a weapon or hold a clenched fist aloft. And the chances are, that person will be a man.

Yet for all its muscular, masculine image, the movement could never have thrived without the contribution of women.

The activist and author Angela Davis recently wrote that two-thirds of the membership of the Black Panther Party was female. And these women certainly weren't there to make up the numbers. They included Ericka Huggins, whose husband, John, was leader of the Los Angeles chapter; Kathleen Cleaver, a communications secretary for the party; and the prison activist Elaine Brown – all of whom joined forces to set up a branch of the Panthers in New Haven, Connecticut.

Women ran *The Black Panther* newspaper, which soon had a global circulation, and in the early 1970s reached the pinnacle of power within the party when Elaine Brown was appointed the organisation's chairwoman.

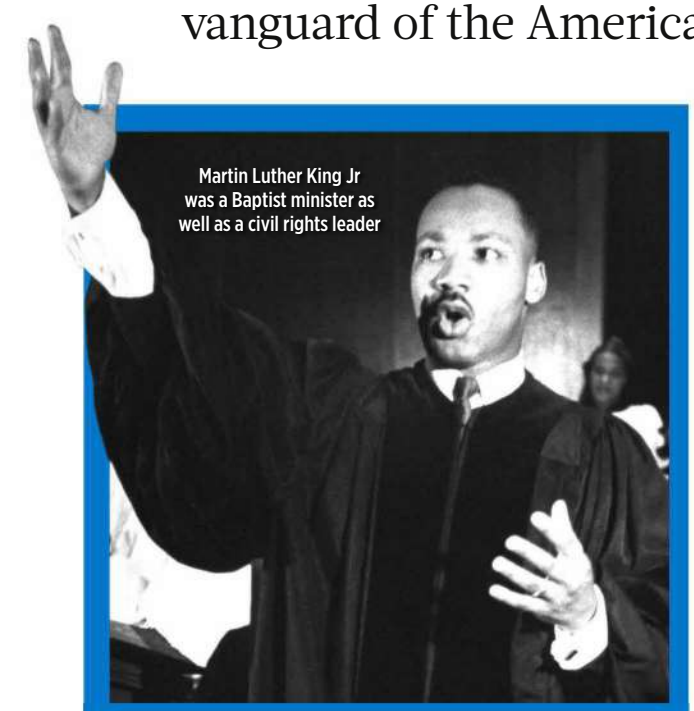
"Because the media tended to focus on what could be easily sensationalised," wrote Angela Davis, "there has been a tendency to forget that the organising work that truly made the Black Panther Party relevant to a new era of struggle for liberation was largely carried out by women."

ABOVE: Elaine Brown served as the Black Panther Party's chairwoman between 1974 and 1977

LEFT: *The Black Panther* newspaper, seen here in the hands of a young party member, was almost entirely run by women

LEADERS, LUMINARIES AND LIVING LEGENDS

We look at a selection of the men and women at the vanguard of the American Civil Rights Movement



Martin Luther King Jr was a Baptist minister as well as a civil rights leader

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR (1929–68)

▲ The campaign for civil rights was a mass movement, but between 1955 and 1968, Martin Luther King Jr was its figurehead. A Baptist minister whose parents were also campaigners, King first came to national prominence when he led the Montgomery bus boycott (1955–56).

Via establishing the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which organised education projects and voter-registration drives, his influence grew. In 1963, during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, he gave his 'I Have a Dream' speech, a soaring demand for equality, to around 250,000 people. The following year, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Despite simmering tensions in the wider Civil Rights Movement over King's advocacy of nonviolent resistance, he remained active until his assassination, in April 1968, by gunman James Earl Ray, at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. "I've seen the promised land," he told a crowd the night before he died. "I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the promised land."

ROSA PARKS (1913–2005)

▶ On 1 December 1955, after spending the day at work, Rosa Parks boarded the Cleveland Avenue bus in Montgomery. Public transport in Alabama's capital was segregated and Parks took a seat in the first row of the "colored" section. Gradually, the bus filled up, which, in the era of segregation, was a cue for driver James Blake to set aside more seats for white people and demand that black passengers move.

Although she knew she faced arrest, Parks refused to comply, an action that has sometimes been portrayed as being down to tiredness. Which isn't how Parks, a longtime activist, saw things. "The only tired I was, was tired of giving in," she later wrote.

While she was not the first person to refuse to give up her seat – people such as Claudette Colvin (b1939) had done the same a few months earlier – Parks' defiance inspired the Montgomery bus boycott. On her death, she was the first woman to lie in honor beneath the dome in the Capitol Rotunda, Washington DC.

Rosa Parks' mugshot after being arrested during a protest in February 1956

MAMIE TILL (1921–2003)

▼ The death of 14-year-old, Chicago-born Emmett Till (1941–1955) while visiting cousins in Mississippi was cruel and brutal. Accused of offending a white woman, 21-year-old grocery store proprietor Carolyn Bryant, by whistling at her, the teenager was abducted, tortured and murdered. An all-white jury acquitted killers Roy Bryant and JW Milam, who later confessed to the crime, knowing they were protected by the rule of double jeopardy.

Despite the brutal violence of Emmett's death, his mother, Mamie, insisted his casket be left open. "I wanted the world to see what they did to my baby," she said. As tens of thousands of mourners viewed Emmett's mutilated body and photographs circulated, the murder became emblematic of the injustices faced by black Americans. Till became a hugely effective spokeswoman and fundraiser for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Later, Till focused on her career in education, teaching for more than 20 years in the Chicago school system and advocating on behalf of children living in poverty.

Mamie Till was determined to ensure that the world knew about the horrors of her son's death

GETTY IMAGES X8, ALAMY X1, MONTGOMERY COUNTY ALABAMA ARCHIVES X1

"MAHALIA JACKSON WAS KING'S FRIEND AND ONE OF HIS MOST LOYAL SUPPORTERS"

Mahalia Jackson was invited to sing two Christian spirituals at the 1963 March on Washington

MAHALIA JACKSON (1911–72)

▲ Watch archive footage of Martin Luther King Jr's famous speech at the end of the March on Washington and there's a moment when the trajectory of what he's saying suddenly changes. King the social campaigner becomes King the preacher as he departs from his notes and improvises. His words take flight after there's a call from off-stage: "Tell them about the dream, Martin!"

It was encouragement uttered by the gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, who sang that day in Washington. She was King's friend and one of his most loyal supporters, an activist who performed often at fundraisers. In 1968, at King's funeral, a heartbroken Jackson sang his favourite song, 'Precious Lord, Take My Hand'.

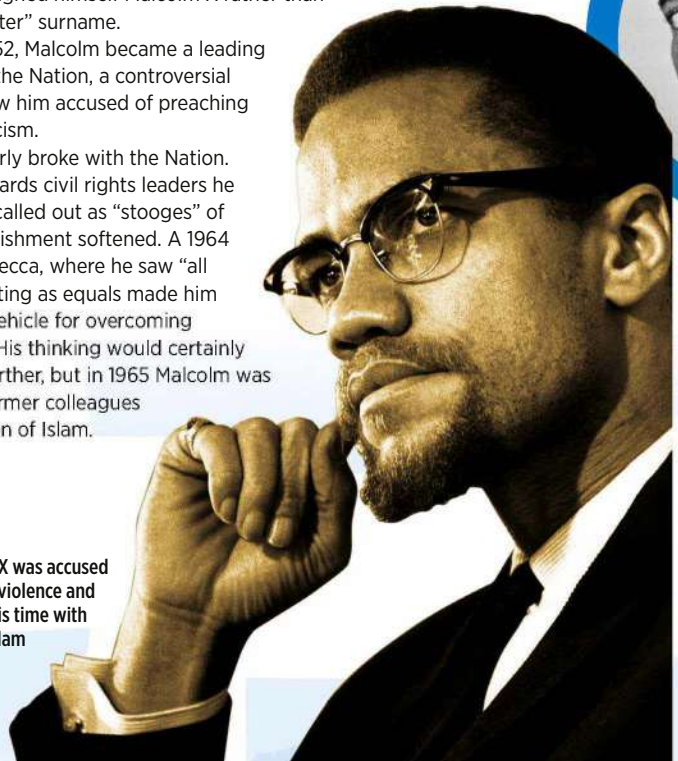
In 1972, Aretha Franklin performed the same song at Jackson's funeral, a reflection of Jackson's own status because, although she refused to record secular music, she was a huge star. Her fans included John F Kennedy, who, in 1961, invited her to perform the national anthem at his inaugural ball.

MALCOLM X (1925–65)

▼ In 1946, following a troubled adolescence, Malcolm Little landed in jail on a 10-year sentence for burglary. By his own account, it was behind bars that Malcolm, a charismatic, complex and contradictory figure, became "truly free" as, with time to read, think and write, he embraced the teachings of the Nation of Islam, a quasi-religious movement that advocated black separatism. From 1950, he signed himself Malcolm X rather than use a "slavemaster" surname.

Paroled in 1952, Malcolm became a leading spokesman for the Nation, a controversial position that saw him accused of preaching violence and racism.

Malcolm latterly broke with the Nation. His attitude towards civil rights leaders he had previously called out as "stooges" of the white establishment softened. A 1964 pilgrimage to Mecca, where he saw "all colours" interacting as equals made him see Islam as a vehicle for overcoming racial tensions. His thinking would certainly have evolved further, but in 1965 Malcolm was murdered by former colleagues within the Nation of Islam.



Malcolm X was accused of preaching violence and racism during his time with the Nation of Islam

JO ANN ROBINSON (1912–92)

▶ Following Rosa Parks' arrest, Robinson stayed up all night to help mimeograph 35,000 leaflets calling for a bus boycott she herself helped organise. A teacher by profession, she was active in Montgomery's Women's Political Council, an important organisation in the Civil Rights Movement.

EARL WARREN (1891–1974)

◀ As Chief Justice of the United States, Warren oversaw cases crucial to the progression of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1967, for example, he wrote the unanimous opinion in the case of Loving vs Virginia, in which the Supreme Court struck down laws banning interracial marriage.

JOSEPH MCNEIL (b1942)

▶ In February 1960, student Joseph McNeil and other members of the 'Greensboro Four', sat down at a "whites only" lunch counter at a Woolworth store. There, they remained all day after being refused service. A wave of similar protests followed and helped inspire the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

JAMES MEREDITH (b1933)

◀ In 1962, after being inspired by John F Kennedy's inaugural address, Meredith became the first African-American student admitted to the segregated University of Mississippi. Meredith's presence sparked the 1962 Ole Miss riot, but he held his nerve to graduate with a degree in political science.

JAMES LAWSON (b1928)

▶ University professor Lawson was one of the Civil Rights Movement's leading intellectuals, who developed ideas and tactics around nonviolent protest. For his troubles, he was expelled from Nashville's prestigious Vanderbilt University, but later received an apology and, in 2006, he returned to teach at the institution as a distinguished professor.

Sepitma Poinsette Clark (*left*) presents an award to Rosa Parks (*right*) at a Southern Christian Leadership Conference event in 1965

SEPTIMA POINSETTE CLARK (1898–1987)

▲ The story of the Civil Rights Movement is often told through its most famous public figures, yet its success was ultimately down to the diligent day-to-day work of activists. For evidence, consider the life of Septima Poinsette Clark, dubbed 'The Mother of the Movement' by Martin Luther King Jr.

Clark was born in Charleston, South Carolina, when William McKinley was president. Her father was a former slave. Her family was relatively poor. Nevertheless, she became a teacher in 1916 and, inspired by Depression-era reformers in the 1930s, pursued activism through education.

In the 1950s, Clark began working at the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee, a grassroots education centre devoted to social justice. Here, she developed citizen workshops. Latterly, believing literacy and political empowerment to be inextricably linked, she pioneered Citizenship Schools that reached out to often poorly educated people in the South – after all, how can you fill out a voter registration form if you can't read and write?

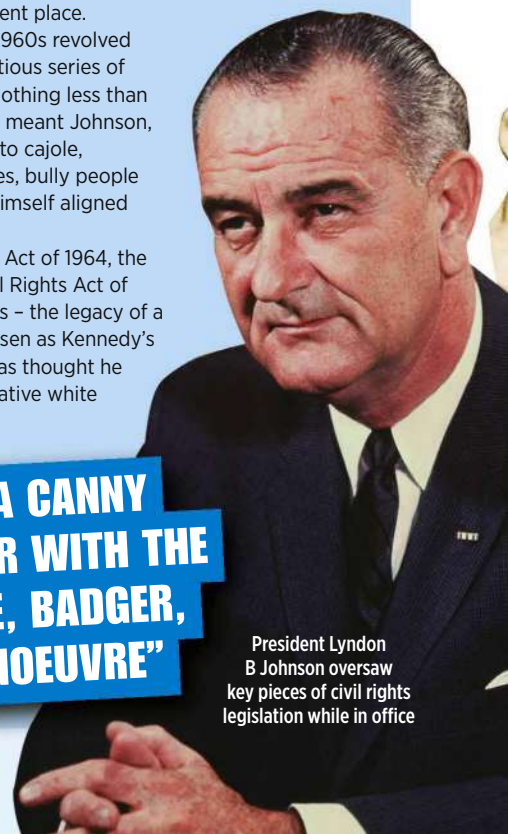
LYNDON B JOHNSON (1908–73)

▶ On 22 November 1963, following the assassination of John F Kennedy, Democrat Lyndon B Johnson became the 36th president of the United States. When he left office in 1969, having secured his own mandate in 1964 in a landslide, his country was a very different place.

Johnson's politics in the middle of the 1960s revolved around the 'Great Society', a hugely ambitious series of domestic programmes that aimed to do nothing less than eliminate poverty and racial injustice. This meant Johnson, a canny political operator with the ability to cajole, badger, charm, manoeuvre and, sometimes, bully people into doing what he wanted, often found himself aligned with the Civil Rights Movement.

With Johnson in charge, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 all reached the statute books – the legacy of a Texan who, ironically, was chosen as Kennedy's running mate because it was thought he would appeal to conservative white voters in the South.

"JOHNSON WAS A CANNY POLITICAL OPERATOR WITH THE ABILITY TO CAJOLE, BADGER, CHARM AND MANOEUVRE"



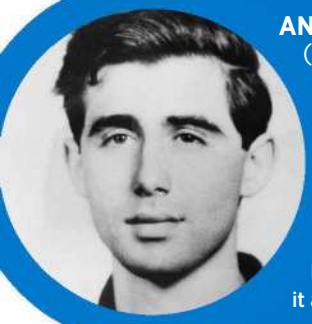
President Lyndon B Johnson oversaw key pieces of civil rights legislation while in office

WALTER REUTHER (1907–70)

▶ Leader of the United Automobile Workers union, Reuther was a progressive who saw his role as being far more than securing better pay and conditions for his members. In 1963, he organised bail for Martin Luther King Jr and 800 others imprisoned in Birmingham, Alabama.

ANDREW GOODMAN (1943–64)

◀ One of a trio of Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) workers murdered during the 1964 voting rights push known as the 'Freedom Summer', there's evidence Goodman was buried alive. The death of a white activist in such brutal circumstances backfired on those fighting change as it attracted national headlines.



CORETTA SCOTT KING (1927–2006)

▶ Martin Luther King Jr's wife, Coretta Scott King was important in her own right as a figurehead and activist. A supportive telephone call from John F Kennedy when her husband was in jail was widely reported and is said to have helped mobilise black voters during the 1960 presidential campaign.

MAYA ANGELOU (1928–2014)

◀ The publication of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* in 1969, the first in a series of seven books that blurred the line between autobiography and fiction, made Angelou a literary star. Arguably the greatest writer to be actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement.

MUHAMMAD ALI (1942–2016)

▶ The Greatest. After taking the World Heavyweight Championship with a surprise victory over Sonny Liston in 1964, Ali transcended boxing. Loud, proud and politically sophisticated, he refused to fight in Vietnam and became a leading figure in the Civil Rights Movement.

GETTY IMAGES X9, ALAMY X2

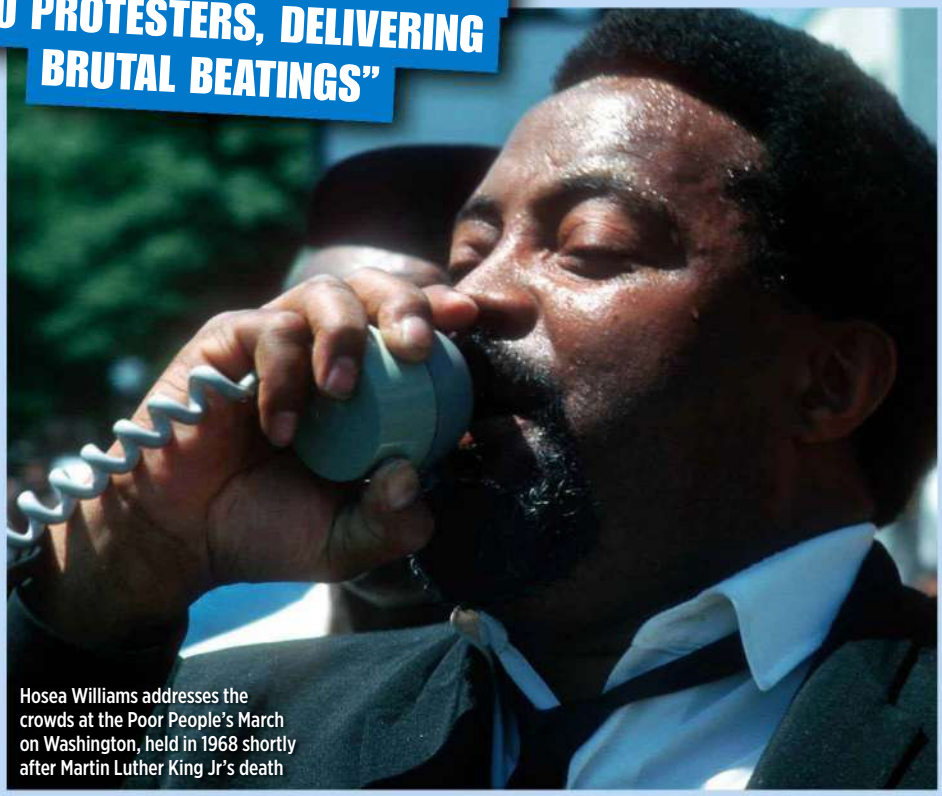
HOSEA WILLIAMS (1926–2000)

▶ One of the reasons nonviolent protest is effective is that, when it's met by violence, it can amplify the weaknesses of your opponent's position. This is precisely what happened on 7 March 1965, dubbed 'Bloody Sunday' by black Americans.

This was the day when the first of three protest marches set out from Selma, Alabama, to the state capital, Montgomery. Led by, among others, Hosea Williams, the marches were designed, at a time of voter suppression, to highlight the demands of African-Americans to exercise their constitutional rights. At the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Alabama police set upon the approximately 600 protesters, delivering brutal beatings. The violence helped give Lyndon B Johnson the space to pass the Voting Rights Act.

Martin Luther King Jr regarded military veteran Williams as his field lieutenant, a man he called "a bull in a china shop". You could also say that Williams – variously a minister, politician, scientist and the founder of a non-profit, Hosea Helps – was the movement's renaissance man.

"THE ALABAMA POLICE SET UPON THE APPROXIMATELY 600 PROTESTERS, DELIVERING BRUTAL BEATINGS"



Hosea Williams addresses the crowds at the Poor People's March on Washington, held in 1968 shortly after Martin Luther King Jr's death

Ella Baker was keen to ensure that women's voices weren't sidelined

ELLA BAKER (1903–86)

◀ According to a biography written by historian Professor Barbara Ransby, Ella Baker was "one of the most important African-American leaders of the 20th century and perhaps the most influential woman in the Civil Rights Movement". If this isn't better known, it's because Baker's main gifts were as an organiser, somebody who worked tirelessly behind the scenes.

One of her core beliefs was that grassroots activists were crucial to the success of organisations, an insight she brought first to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and later the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

In 1960, she founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which built on sit-in protests at segregated lunch counters. The SNCC was active in Mississippi and helped coordinate the 1961 'Freedom Rides'. Crucially, the SNCC was also a training ground for new activists, taught by Baker to be wary of "leader-centred orientation". Like Septima Poinsette Clark, Baker had plenty to say, too, on how women's voices weren't sufficiently heard within the Civil Rights Movement.

SAM COOKE (1931–64)

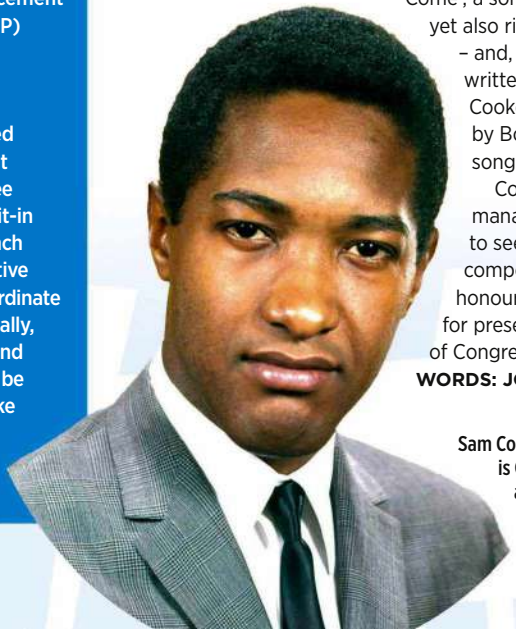
▼ In October 1963, while travelling to the city of Shreveport, Louisiana, singer Sam Cooke called ahead to book rooms at a Holiday Inn. On arrival, he was told there were no vacancies. Livid, Cooke demanded to see the manager, but was eventually persuaded to leave.

With insults being shouted and car horns blaring, Cooke and his fellow travellers, including his wife and brother, headed for the black guest-accepting Castle Motel – where the police were waiting to detain them for disturbing the peace.

The incident helped inspire soul legend Cooke, who was himself active in the Civil Rights Movement, to write one of its defining anthems, 'A Change is Gonna Come', a song that's melancholic yet also righteously angry – and, it's said, was also written partly because Cooke was so impressed by Bob Dylan's protest song 'Blowin' in the Wind'.

Cooke, shot by a motel manager, never lived to see his most famous composition accorded the honour of being selected for preservation in the Library of Congress.

WORDS: JONATHAN WRIGHT



Sam Cooke's single 'A Change is Gonna Come' became an unofficial anthem of the civil rights cause

THIS IMAGE: **White teenagers run through Notting Hill during the race riots that erupted in the London district in 1958**

RIGHT: **More than a hundred people were charged as a result of the disorder, with the police arresting 72 white and 36 black youths**

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X1

A SHARED STRUGGLE

While the precise context may have been different, Britain's own fight for equality drew inspiration from events across the pond

The struggle for civil rights resonated beyond the United States, including in the United Kingdom. But Dr Kennetta Hammond Perry, honorary senior research fellow and founding director of the Stephen Lawrence Research Centre at De Montfort University, stresses that we should always be mindful of the "specificities of the context of disenfranchisement" when looking at echoes of the US movement around the world. Rather than being the result of legally enforced segregation, the British campaign arose during the period when European imperialism was in retreat and postwar British governments were encouraging mass migration from Britain's colonies.

Indeed, throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, immigrants from across the British empire and Commonwealth were answering the call to fill vacancies in the job market. But this sudden change in Britain's demographic makeup provoked racial violence and discrimination in major cities like London, Birmingham and Nottingham. Skilled workers from Britain's overseas territories found their prospects limited by racist attitudes and often had to settle for careers that squandered their experience. And later, when the British economy fell into decline, black workers were disproportionately affected by job losses and unequal pay.

READY TO MOBILISE

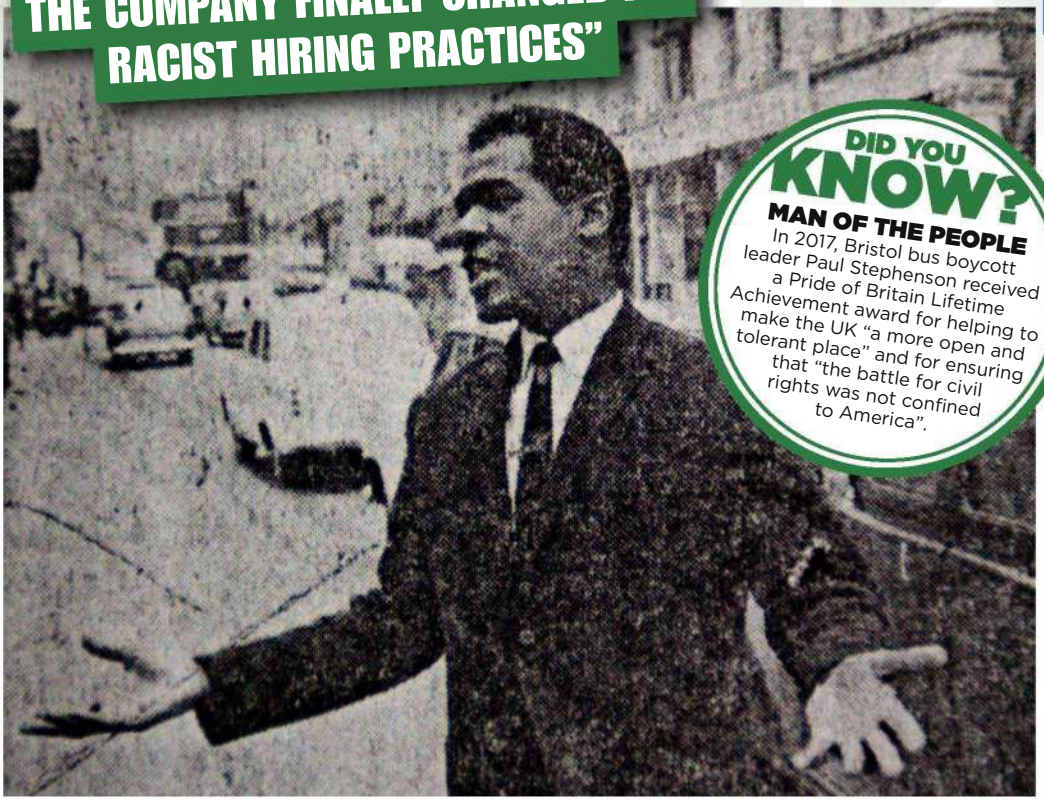
It was a climate that was all-too-readily exploited by far-right movements. Former British Union of Fascists leader Oswald Mosley, for instance, distributed

leaflets bearing the message, "Take action now. Protect your jobs. Stop coloured immigration. Houses for white people – not coloured immigrants". Then, in August 1958, tensions boiled over in London's Notting Hill district when hundreds of white teenagers began attacking the homes of West Indian residents. The race riots drew widespread condemnation, with the delegates at that year's Trades Union Congress even going so far as to claim that "elements which propagated racial hatred in Britain and Europe in pre-war days are once more fanning the flames of violence".

Tragically, more violence was to come, notably when an Antiguan-born carpenter named Kelso Cochrane was murdered by a gang of white youths in west London in May 1959. But the Afro-Caribbean community rallied. As the 1960s dawned, Cochrane's death was treated by UK civil rights groups such as the Committee of African Organizations and campaigners like Claudia Jones (founder of the *West Indian Gazette* newspaper) as symbolic of a mortal peril many migrants feared, and set about organising for change. Over the next decade, they would set up sister rallies to mirror those taking place across the Atlantic, and would pioneer the boycott of South African goods to protest that nation's policy of apartheid. All the while, the British press kept readers informed about the progress of the Civil Rights Movement within the United States.

Among the most famous British protest was the Bristol bus boycott of 1963, triggered by the revelation that the city's main bus company was refusing to hire black and Asian people. Spearheaded by a young social worker named Paul Stephenson and taking inspiration from the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955–56 (*see page 29*), the campaigners refused to ride the city's buses until the firm changed its discriminatory policy. The protest gained national attention, rallying support from politicians and even the former cricketer Learie Constantine, who was by then Trinidad and Tobago's high commissioner to the United Kingdom.

"AFTER FOUR MONTHS OF PROTESTS, THE COMPANY FINALLY CHANGED ITS RACIST HIRING PRACTICES"



DID YOU KNOW?

MAN OF THE PEOPLE

In 2017, Bristol bus boycott leader Paul Stephenson received a Pride of Britain Lifetime Achievement award for helping to make the UK "a more open and tolerant place" and for ensuring that "the battle for civil rights was not confined to America".

ABOVE: **Campaigner Paul Stephenson pictured during the bus boycott he organised in Bristol in 1963**

RIGHT: **South African activist Ruth First at an anti-apartheid rally in London, 1965**

BOTTOM LEFT: **Claudia Jones was one of the UK's most prominent civil rights leaders and the founder of its first black newspaper**

After four months of protests, the Bristol Omnibus Company finally agreed to change its racist hiring practices and the boycott ended on 28 August – by coincidence, the exact same day Martin Luther King Jr delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech during the March on Washington (*see page 31*). On 17 September, Bristol welcomed its first non-white bus conductor, a Sikh man named Raghbir Singh.

LEGAL LANDMARKS

In December 1964, King would venture to Britain himself, stopping in London while en route to Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. His

Malcolm X's 1965 visit to the West Midlands highlighted the discrimination faced by black and Asian people living in Britain

short but significant visit, which saw him delivering a sermon at St Paul's Cathedral, would leave a lasting impact on race relations in the UK, inspiring the formation of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination. The body, founded to agitate for social justice, became a formidable force and was instrumental in securing the passage of the landmark Race Relations Act by Parliament in 1965. For the first time in British history, the state acknowledged the existence of racism within society and made efforts to outlaw discrimination on the "grounds of colour, race, or ethnic or national origins" in public places.

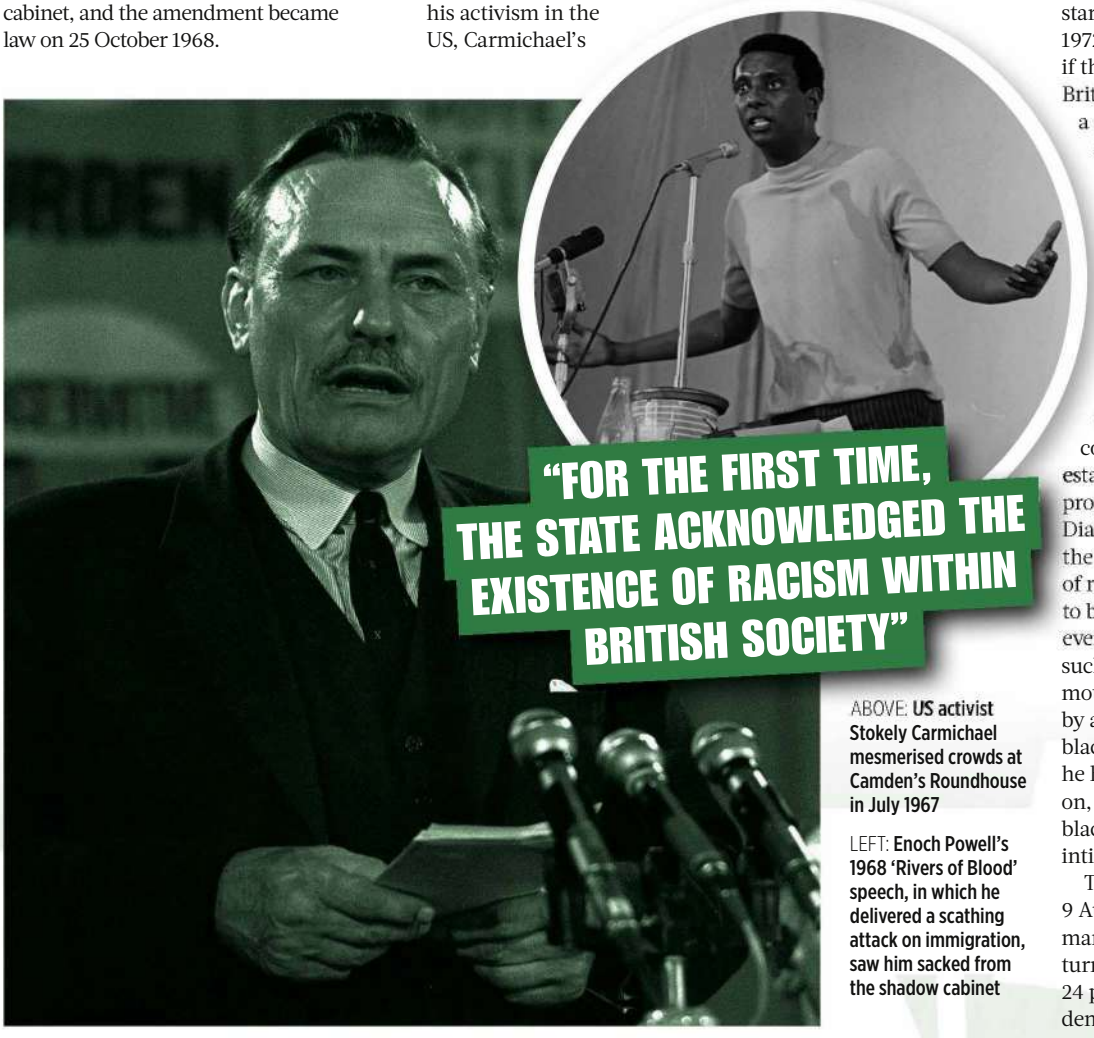
Despite this leap forward, the act left the matter of racial discrimination in housing and employment unsettled. When, in April 1968, an amendment bill was passing through Parliament to redress these concerns, the Conservative MP Enoch Powell chose to deliver his notorious 'Rivers of Blood' speech. Standing in front of fellow Tories in Birmingham, he denounced mass immigration, prophesying that it would ultimately lead to sectarian violence in Britain. The subsequent political fallout saw Powell ousted from the shadow cabinet, and the amendment became law on 25 October 1968.

AMERICAN INSPIRATION

King was not the only titan of the US Civil Rights Movement to set foot on British soil, however. In February 1965, the West Midlands town of Smethwick also gained global attention when it was visited by Malcolm X, less than two weeks before his assassination. He had taken up an invitation to promote solidarity between its black and South Asian communities after racist hostility from some of Smethwick's white inhabitants had escalated as the town became home to a significant immigrant population. During his stay, he denounced the evils of racism in the UK, drawing parallels with the Holocaust and warning against a "fascist element" within the community. In particular, his trip to Smethwick's Marshall Street – where residents had tried to stop the council from letting houses to non-white families – emphasised the ugliness of the abuse.

Two years later, Stokely Carmichael, whose oration had led to the formation of the Black Panther Party in the US (*see page 34*) gave a similarly powerful speech at the Camden Roundhouse, north London. As with his activism in the US, Carmichael's words inspired the launch of several new British campaign groups, which advocated everything from the trenchant defence of black communities to the total overthrow of the British state. The most influential were undoubtedly the British Black Panthers, led by Altheia Jones-LeCointe, who focused on community organisation, running campaigns against discrimination and promoting education. Within five years, they had around 3,000 members, mostly drawn from the Notting Hill and Brixton areas of London, where many Caribbean, African and South Asian immigrants lived.

According to 1971 statistics, the UK was home to around 1.4 million non-white residents, with one-third of those having been born in Britain. However, before long, the British government started limiting immigration, and by 1972, only allowed new arrivals to settle if they held a work permit or had British-born parents or grandparents – a stipulation that disproportionately affected non-white people. Against this backdrop, one famous court case served to underline just how far the cause of civil rights and equality in Britain had yet to travel.



"FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE STATE ACKNOWLEDGED THE EXISTENCE OF RACISM WITHIN BRITISH SOCIETY"

ABOVE: **US activist Stokely Carmichael mesmerised crowds at Camden's Roundhouse in July 1967**

LEFT: **Enoch Powell's 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech, in which he delivered a scathing attack on immigration, saw him sacked from the shadow cabinet**

STATE SURVEILLANCE

Opened in 1968, the Mangrove – a Caribbean restaurant based in Notting Hill – was run by Frank Crichlow, a Trinidadian man who had come to the UK in the early 1950s. The establishment soon attracted a high-profile clientele, including Jimi Hendrix, Diana Ross and Bob Marley. Despite this, the Mangrove soon became the target of regular police raids, which claimed to be searching for drugs, despite none ever being found on the premises. As such, some people believed the true motive was racism, possibly driven by a hatred of Crichlow's success as a black businessman, and the fact that he had a white partner. As time went on, the Mangrove became a hub for black activists to organise against police intimidation and racism.

The febrile situation came to a head on 9 August 1970, when a peaceful protest march beginning at the restaurant turned violent, resulting in injuries to 24 police officers and the arrest of 19 demonstrators. Shortly before the march,

GETTY IMAGES X6, ALAMY X2

Eight members of the Mangrove Nine. Their 1971 trial shone a light on racism in the Metropolitan Police

activists had issued an open letter to UK prime minister Edward Heath, castigating the Home Office's indifference to the police's actions and defending the protest as "necessary", as all other methods had "failed to bring about any change in the manner the police have chosen to deal with black people".

Although the initial charges had been dropped due to contradictory police statements, nine of those detained at the original protest – Barbara Beese, Rupert Boyce, Frank Crichlow, Rhodan Gordon, Darcus Howe, Anthony Innis, Altheia Jones-LeCointe, Rothwell Kentish and Godfrey Millett – were rearrested and charged with incitement to riot. During their subsequent Old Bailey trial, it was alleged that the group had displayed banners bearing the slogan 'Kill the Pigs', inspired by their US comrades in the Black Power Movement (*see page 34*).

Two months later, five of the so-called 'Mangrove Nine' were acquitted, with the remaining defendants receiving suspended sentences for lesser offences.

The affair was an embarrassment for the authorities, with the presiding judge, Edward Clarke QC, stating that it had "shown evidence of racial hatred on both sides" – a verdict the Metropolitan Police were unsuccessful in getting retracted. The case was a major milestone in the fight for civil rights in Britain and inspired other marginalised groups facing bigotry.

As highlighted by Dr Kennetta Hammond Perry, there is an irony in that much of what we know about British civil rights organisations comes from intelligence gathered by the state; many groups, like the Mangrove Nine, were seen as "something to be watched". And although much has been achieved in the decades since, campaigns for racial justice continue in Britain today – again inspired by events across the pond. Indeed, the 2020 murder of George Floyd and the outpouring of anger that followed on both sides of the Atlantic shows the impact that American-led movements continue to have on discussions surrounding equality.

WORDS: DANNY BIRD

The Mangrove protests of 1970 were conducted in opposition to repeated police raids on the London restaurant

ABOVE: **A group of activists march against the 1971 Immigration Bill, which was passed by the UK Parliament that October**

BELOW: **Hundreds of men and women from across the Caribbean came to Britain via the troopship HMT *Empire Windrush* in 1948. Here, a trio of new arrivals get to grips with the London Underground system**

AN ONGOING BATTLE

Mass migration to the UK from its colonies redefined the meaning of 'nationality'

The 1948 British Nationality Act established unified citizenship for the United Kingdom and its overseas territories. It granted entry and residency rights in Britain to individuals born in the British empire or Commonwealth. However, these criteria were not amended despite the end of formal empire in the subsequent decades. The 1971 Immigration Act introduced the concept of 'patrials', only granting entry and residency rights to those with ancestral connections to the British Isles on the basis of documentary evidence, and thus set the scene for the Windrush scandal in 2017, in which hundreds of men and women who had come to the country legally were wrongly detained or deported.

Despite the 1948 law, newcomers to Britain from its colonies soon felt like second-class citizens, facing discrimination in the housing and job markets, as well as racism from pockets of the white population. By the mid-1960s, the enshrinement of civil rights in the United States and the United Nations' adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1963, served to put international pressure on Britain to conform. Although the UK's Race Relations Act (1965) made it a criminal offence to discriminate on racial grounds in public places, some criticised it for not doing enough to address the ways in which the state itself promoted a hostile racial environment.

MEET THE EXPERT

PROFESSOR ADRIANE LENTZ-SMITH ON THE LEGACY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

ADRIANE LENTZ-SMITH is associate professor of history at Duke University, North Carolina. A scholar of African-American history as well as 20th-century America, her works include *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Harvard University Press, 2009). To hear Professor Lentz-Smith discuss the Civil Rights Movement on our new podcast series, *US Civil Rights: Fighting for Freedom*, scan the QR code shown here or visit *historyextra.com/civilrightspodcast*

Activists continually return to the message of 'nobody's free until everybody's free'

The United States bills itself as "with the people, by the people, for the people", Fannie Lou Hamer often noted at civil rights rallies. However, as a black woman sharecropper from Mississippi, she had lived under the racist Jim Crow laws of the American South and thought it more accurate to say, "with the handful, for a handful, by a handful". The goal of the Civil Rights Movement was to "change that, baby," she explained, and make "democracy a reality".

More than half a century later, Hamer's vision of what made democracy a reality still resonates. Her powerful speeches – delivered alongside Malcolm X, at women's rallies and on the floor of political conventions – cited voting rights, ending poverty and providing citizens "proper healthcare" as core necessities. She also captured racism's devastation. Not only did Hamer describe the horrific effects of police violence, but she talked about her children going hungry, and the hysterectomy that the state of Mississippi had performed on her without consent. For Hamer and her fellow activists, civil rights – combined with attention to economic and physical wellbeing – defined human rights. Rights without justice wasn't much of anything at all.

Then, as now, civil rights issues were diffuse but intertwined. Fannie Lou Hamer's speeches would have fit right in at a Black Lives Matter rally today, or as part of ongoing debates about reproductive justice and bodily autonomy. This insistence on thinking about structural transformation with spiritual transcendence was part of what continues to give the fight for racial justice its reach and its salience. The assertions of civil rights activists that they fought "for the liberation of all people" enabled them to connect their movement to others near and far, from struggles over power and identity at home to anti-colonial struggles abroad. And in considering their role in a still-evolving movement, modern-day activists continually return to Hamer's fundamental message: "Nobody's free until everybody's free."

Fannie Lou Hamer stands as a civil rights icon precisely because she was one of thousands; she emerged from a movement that nurtured the power of everyday people to envision and secure liberation. And while turning rights for the handful into justice for everyone remains incomplete and under attack, the movement's commitment to democratic organising inspires countless activists today – whether they are fighting against voter suppression, or the environmental injustices faced by indigenous peoples.

"Strong people don't need strong leaders," Hamer's contemporary, Ella Baker, once said. Indeed, the history of the Civil Rights Movement teaches us what that statement looks like in action and gives us the fortitude to take action ourselves.

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X1

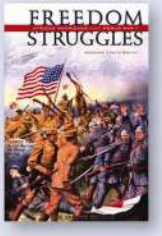
Fannie Lou Hamer (1917–77) addresses supporters in 1965. The Mississippi-born activist devoted her life to making "democracy a reality"

GET HOOKED

Learn more about the Civil Rights Movement with our pick of key resources

BOOKS

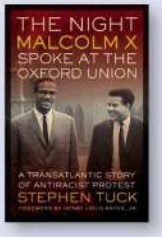
SELECTED BY PROFESSOR ADRIANE LENTZ-SMITH



Freedom Struggles

By Prof Adriane Lentz-Smith (Harvard University Press, 2009)

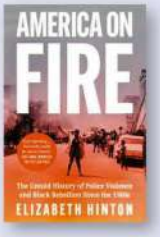
Lentz-Smith examines the impact of World War I on the 200,000 black soldiers sent to Europe with the American Expeditionary Forces, and reveals how African-Americans abroad and at home reworked notions of nation and belonging, empire and diaspora.



The Night Malcolm X Spoke at the Oxford Union: A Transatlantic Story of Antiracist Protest

By Prof Stephen Tuck (California University Press, 2014)

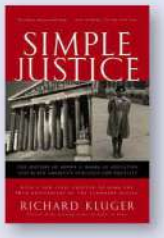
Tuck brings to life the dramatic events surrounding Malcolm X's visit to Oxford in 1964, including the effect of the visit on Malcolm himself and British students.



America on Fire: The Untold History of Police Violence and Black Rebellion Since the 1960s

By Prof Elizabeth Hinton (William Collins, 2021)

Drawing on previously untapped archival sources, acclaimed professor Elizabeth Hinton unravels the extraordinary history of racial inequality in America's past and present.



Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board and Black America's Struggle for Equality

By Richard Kluger (Vintage; revised edition, 2004)

Combining intensive research with original interviews with surviving participants, this is the definitive history of the landmark case Brown vs Board of Education and the struggle for racial equality.

ON THE BBC

BBC SOUNDS

◀ Lives Less Ordinary: I Was There the Night Emmett Till Was Taken

bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0flncxn

Rev Wheeler Parker, Emmett Till's cousin, discusses the horrific murder in 1955 that sparked a wave of protest in America. *Contains distressing scenes.*

BBC SOUNDS

◀ Breaking Mississippi

bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/m001k0c2

This 10-part podcast series tells the story of James Meredith's battle to smash white supremacy in the most racially segregated state in 1960s America.

BBC SOUNDS

◀ The Documentary: Rosa Parks – Quiet Revolutionary

bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p014lhnv

Journalist Max Easterman offers a unique portrait of the woman whose act of defiance inspired civil rights activism across the world.

HISTORYEXTRA PODCAST SERIES

US Civil Rights: Fighting for Freedom

Subscribe at *historyextra.com/civilrightspodcast*

From the Montgomery bus boycott to the March on Washington, this new series explores the fight for equality that changed America. Presented by Rhiannon Davies, the six episodes also feature interviews with the experts in this guide, including Prof Mia Bay, Prof Tomiko Brown-Nagin, Prof Rebecca Brueckmann, Prof Ashley Farmer, Dr Kennetta Hammond Perry and Prof Adriane Lentz-Smith.

WATCH

Selma

(streaming on Amazon Prime)

Starring David Oyelowo, this 2014 film chronicles Martin Luther King Jr's campaign to secure equal voting rights via an epic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1965.

Till

(streaming on Amazon Prime)

Released in 2022, this biopic follows Mamie Till-Mobley's relentless fight to secure justice for her 14-year-old son Emmett, who, in 1955, was lynched in rural Mississippi.

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X3

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LOVE IN THE TIME OF WAR

In 1939, two young women set out to make matchmaking and marriages a more businesslike affair. **Jonny Wilkes** delves into the story of the Marriage Bureau, and reveals how it transformed attitudes towards dating in Britain

Men of the US Marine Corps pictured out with their partners in London, 1941. The outbreak of World War II seemed to make the pressure of finding a spouse feel more urgent

GETTY IMAGES X3

TOP: **Hundreds of men and women would end up filing through the front door of the Marriage Bureau's office on Bond Street**

ABOVE: **Co-founders Heather Jenner (*left*) and Mary Oliver (*right*) conducted interviews with their clients to make sure the matches were suitable**

Neither Mary Oliver nor Heather Jenner expected much to happen when they arrived for work on 17 April 1939. It was the opening day of their new business venture, a matchmaking agency, and until word spread among London's single men and women, the enterprising if inexperienced friends, both 24, expected to have little to do other than smarten up their office above a hairdressers on Bond Street, with its rickety desks and dodgy plumbing. To while away the hours, Mary had brought along her knitting, Heather a book on how to play bridge.

But word had already spread. The novelty of the business, plus the charm of its young proprietors, had attracted plenty of newspaper coverage in the preceding weeks, and it obviously worked. The hundreds of letters already delivered meant Mary and Heather struggled to get through the door, and before long a knock announced their first client. A retired soldier in his forties, Major A sat patiently through the interview, filled out his form and immediately paid the registration fee of five guineas. The Marriage Bureau – the first of its kind – was up and running.

Mary (whose real name was Audrey Parsons, but who used a pseudonym so as not to embarrass her parents) got the idea from her uncle, a tea planter in India who met scores of men working abroad and desperate to marry. Impetuous and determined to live independently, having broken off two engagements, she couldn't shake Uncle George's thought of setting up a company to effect introductions between would-be spouses. What's more, she believed her ideal partner to be society chum Heather Lyon, an ex-debutante now separated from her husband and possessed of an equally strong-willed nature.

Attitudes were shifting, with the 1920s bringing women greater social freedoms and the vote, but marriage still remained the ultimate goal. Well-to-do ladies found husbands at the balls and parties of the annual 'season' or by being shipped to the colonies to meet eligible bachelors. Since their window of opportunity was brief (with women approaching their thirties already dismissed as "spinsters"), they could also take out ads in matrimonial papers and personal columns.

"Luck plays too large a part in this serious business of marriage," wrote Mary. The Marriage Bureau would be different: organised, discreet and committed to making the best matches. To better understand the lay of the land, Mary spent a third of the £15 in her pocket to take out a matrimonial ad herself, only to be inundated with offers that she had to turn down politely.

Then, to ensure that such an agency would actually be legal, she consulted a solicitor. Two, in fact, since the first assumed with a horrified air that she wished to start a brothel.

During the annual London 'season', society balls were one of the few places that young men and women from the upper classes could hope to meet

A SENSE OF URGENCY

It took some time to convince Heather to sign on, but once she too had come up with a pseudonym (opting for the surname Jenner, rather than Lyon), their partnership would be pivotal. Together, they found their shabby office, which they wanted to be in a wealthy part of London to attract the right clientele, and rang up newspapers. Many obliged "Miss Jenner, a magnificent blonde, and Miss Oliver, an entertaining brunette", as the *Daily Mail* put it, by covering the bureau's opening in the spring of 1939 to counter the news of impending war coming from Europe.

Mary was the romantic and wide-eyed one, with Heather more practical and business-savvy. They had expected the first clients to be their single girlfriends and men working abroad they had met during times in India and Ceylon

GETTY IMAGES X6, B7 MEDIA X1

(Sri Lanka). New clients would be interviewed before Mary and Heather made suitable introductions, based on similar social and religious backgrounds, financial situations, interests and aspirations. Everyone paid to register on the bureau's books, and there was an 'After Marriage Fee' of 10 guineas each for successful couples.

After the surge of letters on that first day, however, Mary and Heather had no chance to ease into the bureau's operations gently: clients kept coming in their hundreds. The bureau appealed to rich and poor, high society and low, men and women; there were nobles and MPs, land-owners and heiresses, clergy and armed forces personnel, as well as labourers, farmers, maids, typists, governesses and shopworkers. They patiently queued up the narrow stairs, and – when that became too busy – they climbed a ladder to wait on the roof.

Sometimes parents came on behalf of their children. One man had it written in his will that his two daughters should be registered upon his death. Others made near-prohibitively specific demands of a potential spouse, such as the ageing politician who asked for a wife no older than 35, English of good birth, educated, Church of England, Conservative, of independent means, cultured, refined, healthy, slim, fertile but without children, well-dressed, and not too smart.

Mary and Heather entered every client into a complex yet highly efficient cross-referencing system known as the 'Black Book'. Everyone also had an index card with their registration number and main details, which could be used to keep up-to-date records of who they met. For this, Mary and Heather devised their own social categorisations, from 'Lady and Gent' (upper class) to 'Ladyish and Gentish' (lower middle class) to 'MBTM' ('Much Better Than Most', or working-class, who often paid a lower fee).

GETTING IT RIGHT

At its core, the bureau functioned on intuition: who Mary and Heather felt would match well. They dubbed this process 'mating'. Most of the day would be spent going through the Black Book, client forms and letters, getting to know clients well enough that they got a feeling of who should be introduced to who. "Needless to say, mutual attraction and affection cannot be guaranteed! We cannot play the part of Cupid," read one of the bureau's brochures.

"Mary and Heather entered every client into a complex yet highly efficient cross-referencing system known as the Black Book"

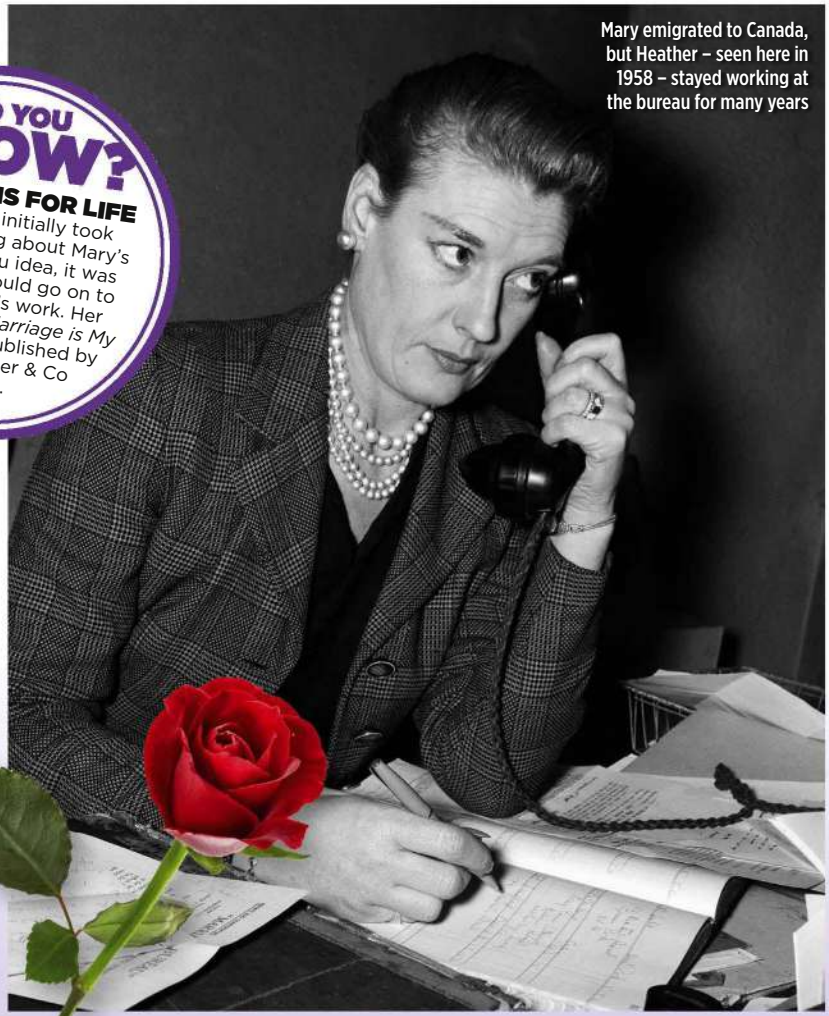
ABOVE: **Mary and Heather soon had to take on extra staff to deal with the sheer volume of clients**

BELOW: **No computer dating here: clients' profiles were studied in great detail and painstakingly 'mated'**

DID YOU KNOW?

MARRIAGE IS FOR LIFE

Although she initially took some convincing about Mary's Marriage Bureau idea, it was Heather that would go on to make it her life's work. Her autobiography *Marriage is My Business* was published by William Kimber & Co in 1953.



Mary emigrated to Canada, but Heather – seen here in 1958 – stayed working at the bureau for many years

FINDING MR AND MRS RIGHT

Forget "good sense of humour" and "must have similar interests" – the Marriage Bureau often had to deal with some bizarre requests from its clients...

"No fat men, bald men, redheads, Welshmen or parsons"

"Broad-minded. Should drink, smoke and be capable of swearing"

"Christian real faith but not R.C. [Roman Catholic] & not a giant, not a dwarf, not American"

"Must be pretty or attractive facially and the only essential qualification: must have only one leg"

"Looks and voice of a Shakespearean heroine"

"Above all, a man who will talk to me"

"Sufficiently educated as to make a fair success of a Times crossword"

"Matter-of-fact, not slushy or sentimental. Names disliked: Gertrude, Emily, Lucy, Eleanor. Names liked: Mary, Elizabeth, Anne, Jean, Jane, Sheila"

"Marilyn Monroe with homely ways"

TOP: A 1952 photograph shows one of the Marriage Bureau's many success stories – Pamela Hill and John MacCrae – enjoying a dance in London

ABOVE: Even the Blitz did not stop weddings; here, a couple are married in a bombed-out church

They did have remarkable success, though. The first marriage came shortly after opening, between a 68-year-old woman and 70-year-old man, and they even managed to find a wife for that demanding politician.

Depending on the case, Mary and Heather often went above and beyond to find a match for a client, such as the time a young woman asked to meet the attractive man living three doors down. Mary went to meet him in person and convince him to register for the bureau so she could set up the introduction.

The bureau thrived thanks to Mary and Heather's blend of matter-of-fact professionalism and compassionate approachability – male clients often proposed to them – but it soon became apparent that they needed help. While the first secretary had to be fired when she was found to be contacting clients in search of a husband for herself, the staff soon expanded to help the pair maintain the records and, eventually, take on the some of the burden of interviewing and 'mating' clients.

Even the outbreak of World War II in September, less than five months after the bureau opened, brought only a

A young client sits waiting in the bureau's London office, getting ready to meet her love match for the first time

temporary halt in business. Mary and Heather were left with just 11 pence in the bank at one point, but as life carried on amid the looming fear and sense of unknown, the desire among the single to be married only intensified. Men preparing to fight wanted to have someone waiting for them at home, while women wanted a husband before the pool of bachelors was tragically drained.

With this greater sense of directness and haste among their clients, the bureau didn't just keep going in war-torn London, it prospered. There would be soon an influx of American troops, too.

LOVE AND HEARTBREAK

By this time, Mary and Heather had relocated to a bigger office down the road at 124 New Bond Street. Fearing a bomb could wipe out everything, on the spur of the moment they rented a dusty country mansion near Aldershot, hoping it would be a safe haven for couples – and the bureau's paperwork. This quickly proved too expensive, though, and they gave it up. Instead, they laboriously copied all their records and stored them in an office in Maidenhead for safekeeping.

All the while, the business of the bureau continued, and this went far beyond mating and introductions. They chaperoned, visited homes, acted as counsellors to their clients, and offered well-worded pieces of advice – such as telling one woman not to reveal her various affairs on first meetings. They even ended up taking proactive roles in arranging the weddings, honeymoons and the setting up of marital homes.

More than anything, Mary and Heather invested part of themselves in each couple. They rejoiced at a telegram reading, "Met at lunch STOP Engaged at dinner STOP Thank you", they persevered with one widower who needed 48 introductions before finding a wife, and they sighed with relief when

"Even the outbreak of World War II in 1939 brought only a temporary halt in business"

a client thought she had been stood up only to find out her match had been knocked down by a car. The couple met in the hospital and soon married.

Of course, not every story ended happily, and Mary and Heather had to endure the lowest of lows, such as when they matched a man named Archie with Ivy, a shopgirl who had lost her entire family – only for Archie's elitist parents to shut down the marriage, leading him to take his own life. Then there's the time a client named Fred contacted the bureau with a description of his perfect woman based on his childhood sweetheart Elsie, only to be matched with Elsie's sister, who quickly put him in touch with his old flame. The fairytale ending was not to be, however, as soon after they reconnected, Elsie perished in the Blitz.

TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES

Eventually, the partnership that built the bureau also came to an end. Mary, in need of a change, stepped away entirely and headed for Canada before settling in the United States, while Heather got married (not to a client) and moved to Scotland, where she had two children. Other than one week every month when she came down to London, she entrusted the bureau to a friend, Picot Schooling, and a compassionate new interviewer, the chain-smoking Dorothy Harbottle, known as 'Bottle'.

From day one, the first decade of the bureau was never anything but a resounding success. It blazed new ground in how people in propriety-fixated Britain treated marriages, it challenged society's expectations by having two women in charge, it survived the war, and, most importantly, it did its job. By December 1946, nearly 2,000 marriages had resulted from its introductions. In peacetime, Heather returned and became a beloved public figure, as well as an agony aunt, and the bureau would enjoy many more years of matchmaking – from Major A to Client Z.

GET HOOKED

READ

Heather Jenner and Mary Oliver's story is told in the book *Marriage Bureau: The True Story that Revolutionised Dating*, written by Mary Oliver and Mary Benedetta with additional material by Richard Kurti. For more information, visit *b7media.com/project/marriage-bureau-2*

From 1942 onwards, troops from the US joined the ranks of the Marriage Bureau's clientele

GETTY IMAGES X8

Circumfula . sedet . digna . parente . choris
Mensa . fuit . Iobi : sic . cumulata . pio
Germinet ut Iobi . stirps . renouata . fuit
Hæc habeant . iocos . gaudia . tanta . dies :
ÆTATIS SVÆ 5 GEMELLI

WHAT GREAT PAINTINGS SAY

An unusual portrayal of Elizabethan prosperity and progeny

William Brook, 10th Lord Cobham and his Family

by the Master of the Countess of Warwick, 1567

Paintings of 16th-century children are incredibly rare, and those that have survived invariably depict Elizabethan youngsters as miniature adults, blank stares on their pinched faces. This work, though, created less than a decade into the reign of Elizabeth I, is different. Six red-haired children stare out at us, their faces both lifelike and individual. Offspring of William Brook, 10th Lord Cobham, and his second wife, Frances Newton (*standing*), they have gathered for a 'sweet banquet' of fruits and treats. Far from a formal meal or an occasion to instruct the children in table manners, though, the scene is delightfully chaotic. A small dog paws at a little boy, while his brother, seated on his aunt's lap, cradles an apple as he might a favourite toy. A marmoset looks set to pounce on an unsuspecting parrot, while the family's young heir, deliberately placed in front of his father, shows off his pet goldfinch.

"It's a wonderful example of a pious family celebrating its prosperity and progeny," says Lucy Whitaker, guest curator of a new exhibition of Renaissance marriage portraits at the Holburne Museum, Bath. "What we're looking at is a symbolic rather than actual banquet, a feast of foods that only the very wealthy could afford: pears, apples, grapes, walnuts, cherries, wine and, in a dish at the end of the table, sugar-coated seeds and spices known as ragged comfits. From the bone-handled knife to the gold cup to the exotic animals, everything is designed to impress."

Brook was evidently keen to show off his wealth and fecundity. A friend of William Cecil, chief advisor to Elizabeth I, Brook had been appointed warden of the Cinque Ports in 1559, a post he would hold for nearly 40 years. The Virgin Queen visited the family home, Cobham Hall, on two separate occasions.

Elsewhere, the children's importance is enhanced by the inclusion of their names and ages, engraved above their heads: (*left to right*) William (2); Henry (1); Maximilian (6); twins Elizabeth and Frances (5); Margaret (4). A seventh child, George, was born to the couple in 1568.

"The identity of the artist has not been definitively proven," says Whitaker, "but the unusual grouping and exquisite details of this work, and others attributed to the same individual, saw Arnold Derickson, a pupil of the Flemish painter Hans Eworth, named as the likely artist in an exhibition at Compton Verney earlier this year." ⊙

WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

GET HOOKED

William Brook, 10th Lord Cobham and his Family is on show in the Painted Love: Renaissance Marriage Portraits exhibition at The Holburne Museum, Bath, until 1 October 2023. For details, see *holburne.org*

1. SWEET TREATS

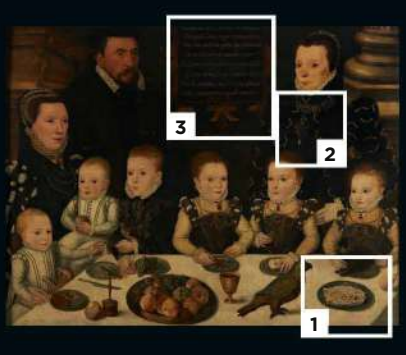
Sugar was an expensive commodity, so these ragged comfits – seeds or spices coated in layers of sugar – would have been a real luxury.

2. SHIP PENDANT

Frances Newton was one of Elizabeth I's ladies-in-waiting. Her elaborate ship pendant, a design favoured by the queen, could also be a nod to her husband's position as warden of the Cinque Ports.

3. INSCRIPTION

A Latin inscription reads: *See here the noble father, here the most excellent mother. Seated around them spreads a throng worthy of their parents. Such was the family of the patriarch Jacob, such the progeny gathered about the pious Job. God grant that the line of Cobham beget many offspring such as Joseph, and flourish like the seed of Job restored. Much has been given to the noble race of Cobham. Long may their joys endure.*



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SCALPELS & STETHOSCOPES

We take a pictorial journey through the Victorian and Edwardian revolution in medical science – from images of incredible inventions to snapshots of surgeons who were right at the cutting edge

OPERATING THEATRE, 1901

Charing Cross Hospital is one of London's foremost teaching hospitals, training students and treating patients for more than 200 years. This remarkable photograph, taken at the turn of the 20th century, shows a medical procedure being conducted inside one of the institution's operating theatres, observed by men seated in an encircling gallery. Despite moving five miles west to Hammersmith in 1973, the hospital – originally based in buildings close to Charing Cross Station – still retains its original name.

DID YOU KNOW?

A RIGHT ROYAL PAIN

Days before his coronation in 1902, Edward VII fell critically ill with appendicitis. Fortunately, surgeon Frederick Treves managed to drain the abscess around the royal appendix, and though the coronation was postponed, Edward awarded Treves with a baronetcy.

MOBILE DENTIST, 1883

▲ In an era before routine appointments, dentists could simply roll into town and set up shop. Armed with his tools, expertise and trusty steed, this travelling dentist is pictured turning up to treat patients at the May Fair in Ballyclare, Ireland, in 1883.

PIONEERING PAEDIATRICS, 1893

▲ Opened in 1852, the Hospital for Sick Children (better known today as Great Ormond Street Hospital) was the first facility in the English-speaking world dedicated specifically to paediatric medicine. From its original 10 beds, the hospital grew into a world-leading infirmary, receiving the patronage of Queen Victoria and Charles Dickens. Here, a young patient sits up in bed on the hospital's Clarence ward, named after Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale.

NUMBING THE PAIN, 1862

◀ Joseph Thomas Clover, shown here administering chloroform to his father, John, revolutionised anaesthesia and invented several devices to deliver it in safe doses. In fact, he managed to administer anaesthesia more than 13,000 times without a single fatality – a remarkable achievement for the time. Clover's expertise was highly sought after, and he attended the surgery of some of the era's most famous figures, including Napoleon III and Florence Nightingale.

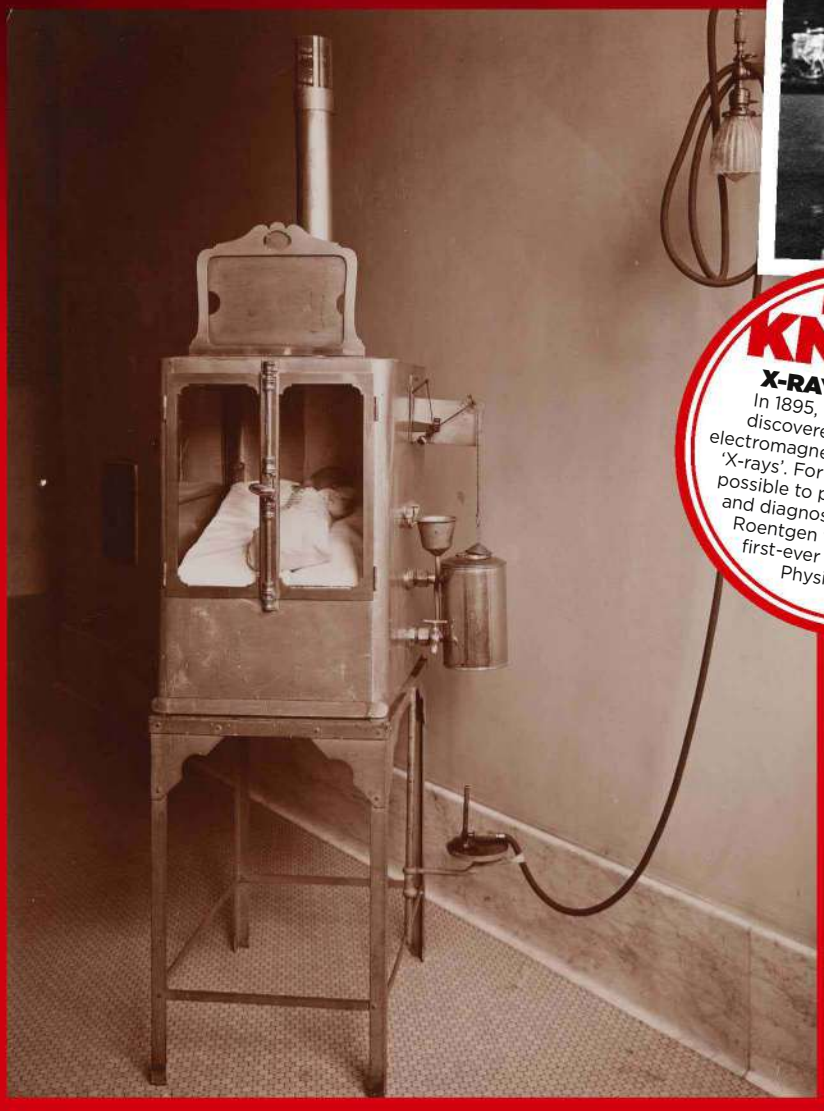
ALAMY X4

LAUNDRY DUTY, 1910

▲ As knowledge of infection grew, medical facilities began to prioritise sanitation. Here, female staff members at Long Grove Hospital in Surrey tackle piles of dirty laundry.

A TEAM EFFORT, c1880

▶ The Victorians refined their approach to healthcare, assigning teams of dedicated doctors and nurses to wards, as seen here at Guy's Hospital in London.



DID YOU KNOW?

X-RAY VISIONARY

In 1895, Wilhelm Roentgen discovered a wavelength of electromagnetic radiation he called 'X-rays'. For the first time, it was possible to peer inside the body and diagnose certain ailments. Roentgen was awarded the first-ever Nobel Prize for Physics in 1901.

STITCH THEM UP, c1890

▲ Before gowns, caps, masks and gloves became commonplace, surgeons performed operations in the height of Victorian tailoring – as seen in this image from c1890. Interestingly, the well-dressed chaps in the picture are treating their patient with phenol, a caustic disinfectant used to mitigate infection. Pioneered by Joseph Lister in 1865, it was originally used to combat bad odours in Paris's sewer network.

MECHANICAL WOMBS, c1890s

◀ After seeing a similar device used to incubate poultry, obstetrician Stéphane Tarnier developed a machine that imitated the mother's womb for premature babies. By the turn of the 20th century, paying spectators could view newborns undergoing treatment in situ at international expositions and fairgrounds. Gradually, specialist neonatal units were established and outfitted with incubators, like this one at Sloane Maternity Hospital in New York City.

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X3, WELLCOME COLLECTION X1

THE NATION'S PHARMACIST, 1916

▼ In the late 19th century, Nottinghamshire businessman Jesse Boot made it his mission to make high-quality medicines both affordable and readily available from qualified pharmacists. Starting off with a single herbal remedies shop founded by his late father, John, he went on to found a successful chain of high street chemists, now present in virtually every town in Britain.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD, 1908

▶ Carrying out their duties carefully and methodically, two members of staff are seen here weighing a new arrival at the General Lying-In Hospital in Lambeth. Opened in 1767, the south London institution was one of the first maternity hospitals in Britain, and would help deliver bundles of joy for more than 200 years. It also boasted a midwifery school, set up in 1879.

PLAYFUL HEALING, c1900

▲ By the early 20th century, the belief that a nurturing environment could aid in the healing process saw children's wards transformed into colourful and comforting places, as opposed to the decidedly plainer spaces that had gone before.

LIFE AND LIMB, c1890

◀ Advances in anaesthetics and surgery meant that, by the end of the Victorian era, patients such as this woman – about to have a limb amputated – were more likely to survive and enjoy a quality of life that was once unthinkable.

WORDS: DANNY BIRD

GET HOOKED

LISTEN

Learn more about maladies and remedies of the past with *HistoryExtra*'s collection of podcast episodes about the history of medicine. Stream the full set at *historyextra.com/medicine-episodes*

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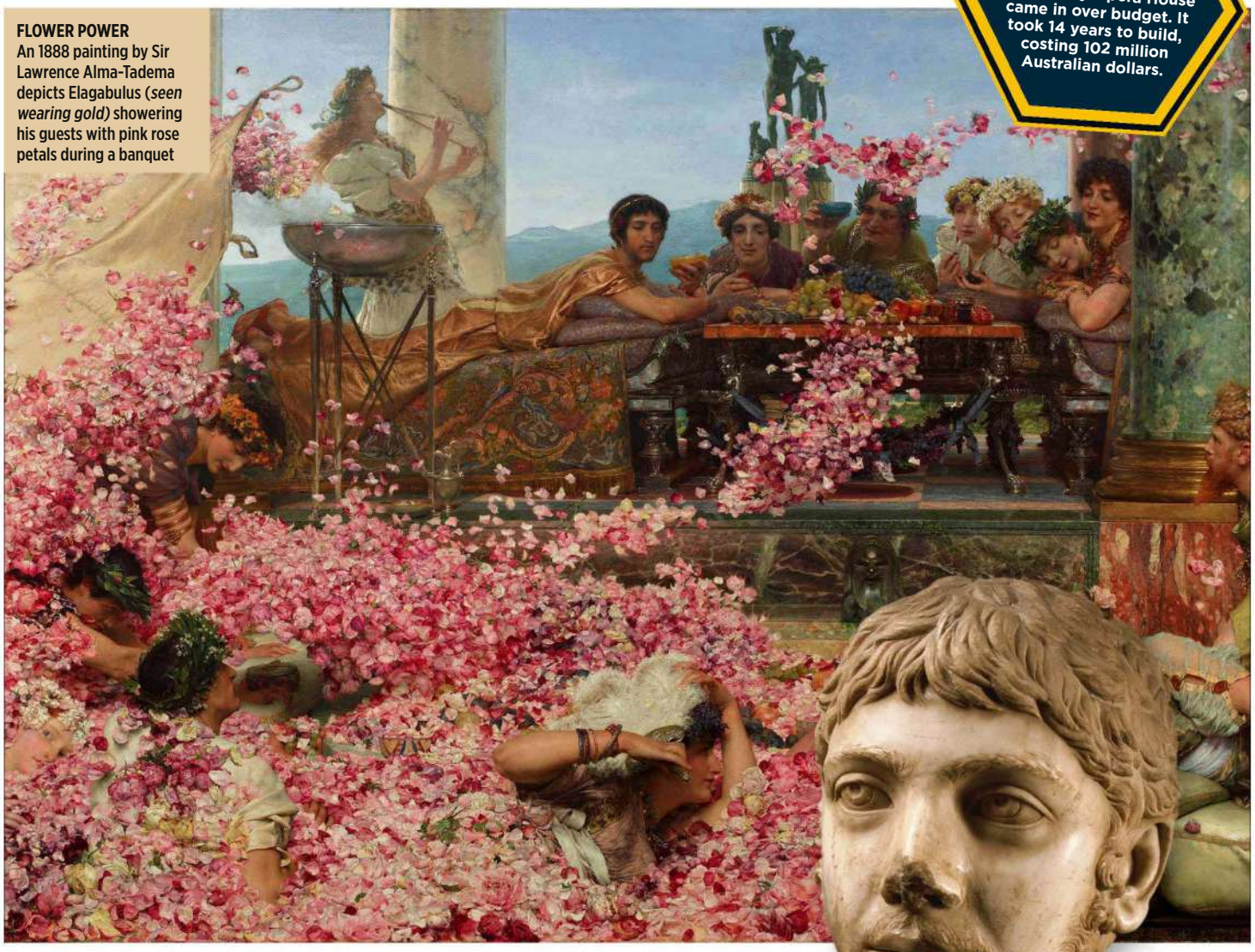
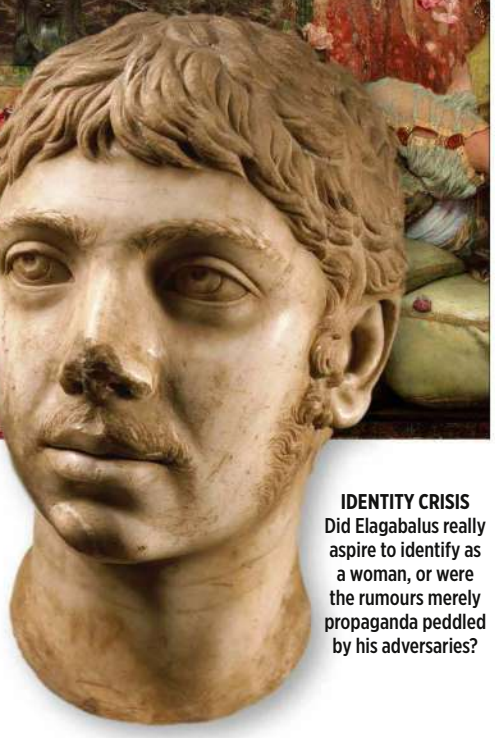
1,400

The number of percentage points that the construction of the Sydney Opera House came in over budget. It took 14 years to build, costing 102 million Australian dollars.



FLOWER POWER
An 1888 painting by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema depicts Elagabulus (*seen wearing gold)* showering his guests with pink rose petals during a banquet

Was Roman emperor Elagabalus transgender?



IDENTITY CRISIS
Did Elagabalus really aspire to identify as a woman, or were the rumours merely propaganda peddled by his adversaries?

SHORT ANSWER This answer will use he/him: not because Elagabalus wasn't trans, but because we're not actually sure

LONG ANSWER Generally speaking, the words that have historically been associated with the four-year reign of Elagabalus are 'depraved', 'incompetent' and 'eccentric'. Brought to power in AD 218 through his grandmother's scheming, he reordered the religion of the Roman empire (with himself as high priest), had generals and senators executed, and flaunted sexual appetites that even Romans found a bit much. At the same time as he speed-married and divorced at least four wives – and among them a Vestal Virgin, a priestess who, as the name suggests, shouldn't have been the marrying type – he took numerous male lovers. Rumours also spread of prostituting himself at brothels and even of tying the knot with a male charioteer.

But lurking in the annals of Roman history, there are some intriguing details. He preferred to be called by feminine terms, like 'lady', and affected a 'womanly' look by wearing makeup and wigs. Most tellingly, he supposedly asked physicians to give him a vagina. This interest in reassignment surgery has fuelled the claim that Elagabalus should be remembered as transgender. Making a judgment on a historical person's gender is fraught with difficulty, however, especially when the main sources had been written to slander an unpopular ruler, as was the case with Cassius Dio's less-than-friendly accounts of Elagabalus. The truth is: who can say definitively? It certainly seems that he was coming to terms with his gender and sexuality, and this undoubtedly collided with the machismo expected of Roman men, let alone the empire's ruler.

GETTY IMAGES X2

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
A depiction of Ned Ludd (*below*), whose destruction of stocking frames is said to have inspired his followers to do the same (*left*)

PODCAST

Who were the Luddites?

Answered by Professor Katrina Navickas, author of *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789–1848* (Manchester University Press, 2017)

The Luddites were a group of skilled artisans, primarily working in the textile industry, who led a violent protest against industrialisation during the early years of the 19th century. Taking their name from Ned Ludd, a folkloric figure who was said to have conducted a similar protest in the 1770s, the Luddites began their campaign in March 1811 with the destruction of around 60 stocking frames in the town of Arnold, Nottinghamshire. Before long, other workers had joined their cause as it spread across the East Midlands, into West Yorkshire and then to southeast Lancashire.

Overall, the Luddites were dismayed at the introduction of machinery that threatened to replace their expertise and control over their work. They also valued the small workshops and close-knit communities they worked in, as opposed to the large factories and steam operations that were becoming increasingly common. It was a movement rooted in the defence of traditional skills, and preservation of a way of life.

▶ To hear more from Professor Katrina Navickas on the Luddites, visit *historyextra.com/luddites-pod*

$73.13

Until her death in May 2020, Irene Triplett received this amount per month as the last surviving recipient of an American Civil War pension. Her late father, Mose, had been a veteran.

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X2

Did Ramesses II have a passport?

Answered by **Toby Wilkinson**, author of *Ramesses the Great: Egypt's King of Kings* (Yale University Press, 2023)

In September 1976, journalists descended on Le Bourget Airport in Paris with the hopes of catching sight of a royal visitor. But the guest wasn't a serving head of state – and nor was he even alive. In fact, the onlookers were there to witness the arrival of Ramesses II of Egypt, whose remains were being flown to France to undergo conservation.

The groundwork for the visit had been laid in 1975, when the French doctor Dr Maurice Bucaille had discovered that the pharaoh's body was riddled with fungal disease. After Bucaille published details of his discovery, French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing persuaded his Egyptian counterpart, President Anwar Sadat, that scientists in Paris might be able to help conserve the mummy.

The project was a success, but that was not the only story to make the headlines. In a tale that was almost certainly concocted by the media, it was alleged that Ramesses – who had died around 1213 BC – was required to carry a passport under French law. Not only that, but the document was even said to have denoted the pharaoh's occupation as 'King (deceased)'.

Although that particular story is an urban myth, there were some genuinely unusual elements to the 'state visit'. Upon Ramesses' return to Egypt, the crate bearing his mummy was adorned with a blue velvet drape, intricately embroidered in gold by seamstresses from the Louvre. Every effort was made to bestow upon him the regal trappings that befitted a monarch of Ramesses the Great's stature.

▶ To hear more from Toby Wilkinson on the life and times of Ramesses II, visit *historyextra.com/ramesses-ii-pod*

THE HOMECOMING KING
The mummy of Ramesses II (*above*) was flown over to France for tests in 1976, before being returned to Egypt in an elaborate crate (*right*)

TO THE END OF THE EARTH
Russian commanders reported seeing a "wall of ice" when they first set eyes on Antarctica in 1820

Who first sighted Antarctica?

SHORT ANSWER Like buses, Antarctica waited millennia to be seen, only for three 'discoverers' to come at once

LONG ANSWER Although a large continent at the south of the world had been theorised by the ancient Greeks, there is no record of anyone laying eyes on Antarctica until the 19th century. Then, it came together quite quickly. Events began when a British captain named William Smith spotted frozen lands in February 1819, which turned out to be the South Shetland Islands. This news inspired Irish Royal Navy officer Edward Bransfield to push further and, almost exactly a year later, he sighted the northernmost tip of mainland Antarctica. The only problem was that three days earlier, on 27 January 1820, Russian commanders Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen and Mikhail Lazarev recorded their observations of a high wall of ice. This tends to be the moment celebrated as the first sighting.

But should it be? Recent research of Māori oral histories points to the Polynesian voyager Hui Te Rangiora. He travelled to a frozen land and sea, Te tai-uka-a-pia, that may well have been Antarctica – in the seventh century AD.

23,844

The number of Ottoman soldiers that were impaled on wooden stakes along a road stretching for more than a mile upon on the orders of Vlad the Impaler in 1462.

How was inoculation against disease introduced to Britain?

PODCAST

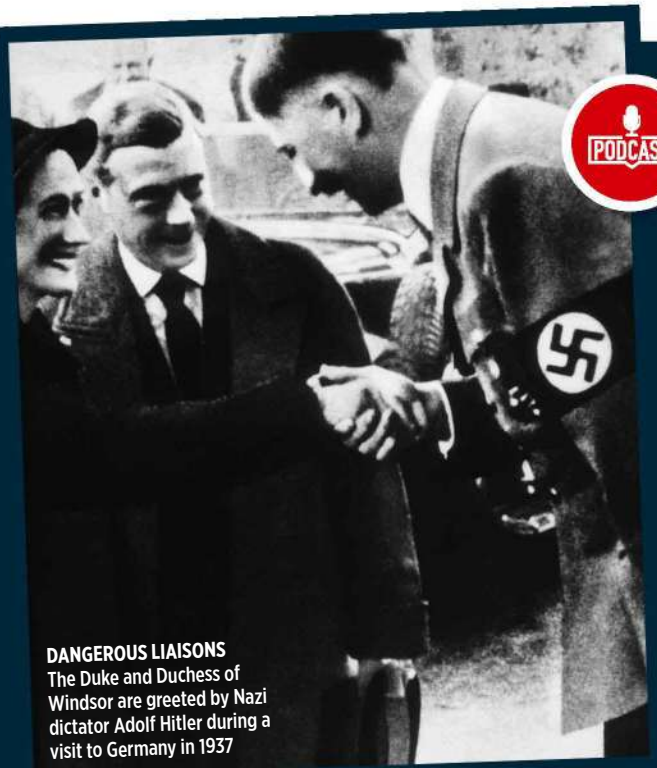
Answered by **Simon Schama**, author of *Foreign Bodies: Pandemics, Vaccines and the Health of Nations* (Simon & Schuster, 2023)

In 1717, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife of the British ambassador to the Ottoman empire, observed that women in Constantinople who had undergone inoculation (the process of being infected with a weak form of a disease to gain future protection) not only survived smallpox, but also remained unmarked by its tendency to scar. Having endured smallpox herself, Wortley Montagu recognised inoculation's potential to save lives, and thus set about using her connections to make sure it was promoted back home.

The most important person she won over was Caroline of Ansbach, wife of the future George II, who then had her own children inoculated. The endorsement of the royal family, along with the resulting attention it received, ensured that other members of the elite did the same. Nevertheless, opposition persisted, particularly from the clergy, who regarded it as interference with divine judgment.

▶ To hear more from Simon Schama on the history of pandemics and public health, go to *historyextra.com/pandemics-pod*

JENNER'S DEBT
Edward Jenner invented the smallpox vaccine 75 years after Mary (*right*) ran her campaign



DANGEROUS LIAISONS
The Duke and Duchess of Windsor are greeted by Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler during a visit to Germany in 1937

PODCAST

Was Edward VIII a Nazi sympathiser?

Answered by **Alexander Larman**, *author of The Windsors at War: The Nazi Threat to the Crown* (Orion, 2023)

Edward VIII, who famously abdicated the throne in 1936, has long been maligned for his alleged Nazi sympathies. Although not a member of the Nazi Party or formally affiliated with the Third Reich, he considered Adolf Hitler to be great leader, and believed that the Nazis had restored Germany to greatness. In fact, the royal desired similar policies for Britain, and like other members of the aristocracy, favoured appeasing the Nazi regime in order to avoid a world war.

When hostilities ultimately broke out between Britain and Germany in 1939, Edward (who was by then known as the Duke of Windsor) was considered a threat to national security. In fact, it has even been suggested that he provided the Nazis with detailed plans of Buckingham Palace, enabling German bombers to successfully target the building on 13 September 1940. The attack, in which his brother King George VI narrowly escaped harm, further underscores his dubious loyalties.

▶ To hear more from Alexander Larman on Edward VIII's alleged Nazi connections, visit *historyextra.com/windsor-war-pod*

GETTY IMAGES X6, ALAMY X2, KOSTAS KOTSANAS - MUSEUM OF ANCIENT GREEK TECHNOLOGY X1

FALSE START
The competitors of the 1928 women's 800 metres final spring into action – much to the disgust of some onlookers

Why was the women's Olympic 800 metres banned?

SHORT ANSWER Erroneous reports of widespread exhaustion aimed to keep women out of sports. And it worked.

LONG ANSWER Women's athletics debuted at the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam: just eight games after the men got under starter's orders, and with the women having to suffice with less than a quarter of the events. They competed in the 100 metres, 4 x 100 metres, high jump, discus and the 800 metres, which, by all accounts, was a total disaster.

Of the 11 runners, five collapsed and five fainted at the finish line, while the last woman standing fainted in the changing room. The newspapers had a (track and) field day, describing the "wretched" race as "not a very edifying spectacle to see a group of fine girls running themselves into a state of exhaustion". The *New York Times* summed up the fears of putting women and physical exertion together: "Even this distance makes too great a call on feminine strength."

Except, every word was a lie. There were only nine women in the final, and each of them completed the race. Not only that, six beat the world record time. Lina Radke from Germany won gold at two minutes, 16 seconds, with Japan's Kinuye Hitomi taking silver and Inga Gentzel of Sweden taking bronze.

Still, the mendacious reports (with emphasis on *men*dacious) damaged the years-long fight to get women's athletics at the Olympics. The 800 metres would be dropped and not reinstated for 32 years.

DID YOU KNOW?

OH CRÊPE!
During a visit to St Louis in 1887, Frances Cleveland, wife of US president Glover Cleveland, had a hot pancake thrown onto her lap from the crowd. The batter pudding hurler, Anne Sax, was later fined $50 for her misdemeanour.

TIME AT THE BARD
In October 1940, a live BBC Radio production of *Hamlet* overran so badly that an announcer had to bring it to a premature end – saying, "And there we must leave them" – even though most of the play's characters were still alive.

SIGN OF LOVE
When the deaf and dumb Thomas Tillsye married Ursula Russel in 1575, he used sign language for his vows, including laying his hand on her heart and pointing to the heavens to "show his continuance to dwell with her to his lyves ende".

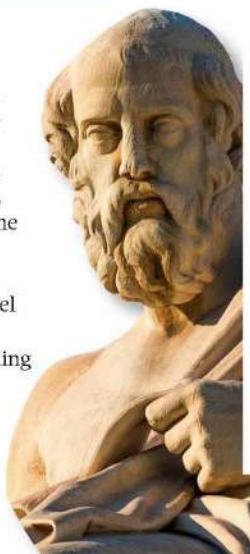
TALK LIKE AN EGYPTIAN
Cleopatra may not have been Egyptian herself, but she was the only member of the Greek Ptolemaic dynasty to learn the language. In fact, it was recorded that she could speak eight or nine languages in all.

Did Plato make an alarm clock?

SHORT ANSWER Well, he had to come up with a way of getting to his dawn lectures, didn't he?

LONG ANSWER The great Athenian philosopher Plato was a busy man: expanding on the work of his teacher Socrates, writing his dialogues, and heading his Academy to teach the next generation, including Aristotle. He had reason to be up bright and early, not least because he lectured at dawn. With that in mind, Plato made modifications to an existing water clock, where time could be measured with water passing from one container to another at a regular speed.

By adding a thin tube inside the second vessel, it meant the water would rise and spill into a third vessel quickly, which built up air pressure. This could only escape through a valve on the side that let out a whistling sound. Voila! Plato had a proto-alarm clock.

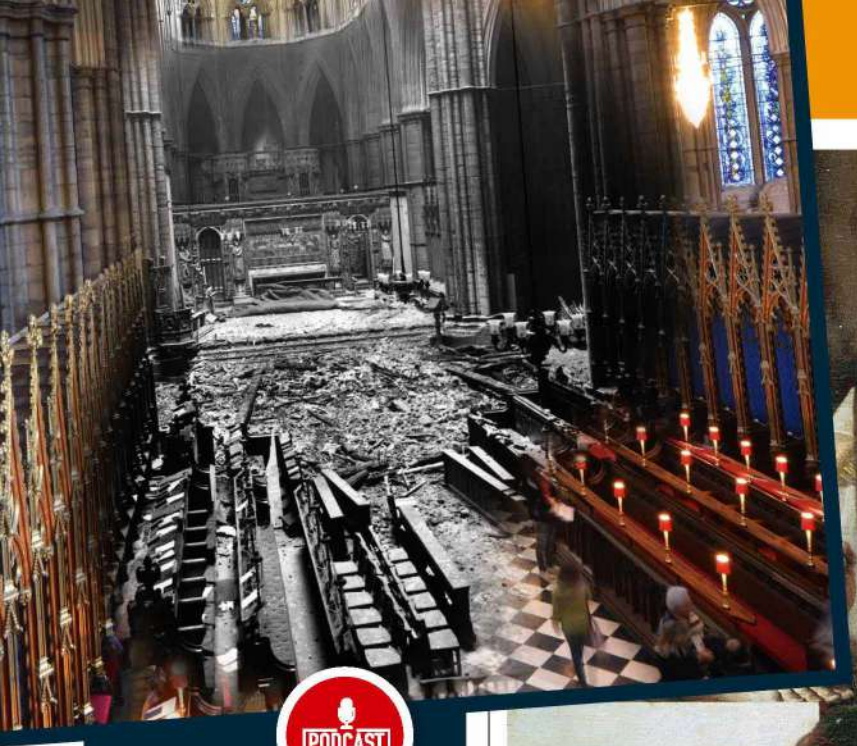


THINKING TIME
A bust of Plato (*right*) and a recreation of his 'alarm clock' (*left*), which emitted a whistling sound via the valve shown circled

What were paltoks?

SHORT ANSWER Before he wrote *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer did some risqué clothes modelling

LONG ANSWER Geoffrey Chaucer is a giant in the world of English literature as the adored author of ***The Canterbury Tales***. But his earliest mention in the annals of history strikes a far less reverential tone. In 1357, his patron, noblewoman Elizabeth de Burgh, bought the teenage Chaucer paltoks for four shillings. According to a contemporary chronicler, these were "extremely short garments... which failed to conceal the arses of the private parts". In fact, paltoks left so little to the imagination that some members of the medieval clergy condemned the clothing as incurring the wrath of God and bringing about plague.



PODCAST

What happened to Westminster Abbey during the Great Fire of London?

Answered by Professor David Carpenter, author of *Henry III* (Yale University Press, 2023)

Unlike St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey survived the 1666 Great Fire of London completely unscathed. Westminster is actually situated several miles to the west of the City of London, and the flames mercifully did not make it that far. However, the great royal church – which has served as the setting for every English (and, later, British) monarch's coronation since 1066 – did suffer badly during the Blitz. On the night of 10–11 May 1941, a cluster of incendiary bombs burned through the building's central lantern roof, pouring molten lead directly onto the spot where monarchs are crowned during coronation ceremonies. Meanwhile, other parts of the abbey, such as the Deanery and the 14th-century Cheyneygates (over the entrance to the cloisters) were gutted by fire, as was Westminster School Hall.

▶ To hear more from Professor David Carpenter on Westminster Abbey, visit *historyextra.com/westminster-pod*

DEATH OF A DICTATOR
Caesar's murder at the hands of the Roman Senate has fascinated authors, playwrights and historians for centuries

GETTY IMAGES X3

64

The number of lifeboats that *Titanic* was designed to carry, despite only setting sail with 20. The first lifeboat to evacuate also left with 28 people on board, despite having space for 37 more.

Were Julius Caesar's final words "Et tu, Bruté"?

Answered by **Professor Barry Strauss**, author of *The Death of Caesar* (Simon & Schuster, 2015)

PODCAST

After being stabbed multiple times by dagger-wielding senators on the Ides of March (15 March) in 44 BC, Julius Caesar was probably too shocked, not to mention in excruciating agony, to utter much at all. Nevertheless, multiple sources have sought to evoke the drama of this event since ancient times. One even claims that the ailing, but cunning dictator, snatched a stylus and stabbed one of the conspirators in retaliation. Regardless, Caesar did not say *Et tu, Bruté?* ("You too, Brutus?") while confronted by his erstwhile colleague, Marcus Brutus. In fact, this memorable Shakespearean quote was coined during the Renaissance.

Yet, some ancient sources do remark on Caesar having addressed Brutus during the assassination with *Kaì sú, téknon?* ("You too, child?"). Speculation abounds as to whether Caesar was showing off his sophistication by quoting a Greek play; or perhaps vocalising a common vengeful inscription found on Roman curse tablets: *Kaì sú* ("You too"). Another possibility was Caesar confirming the rumour that he was in fact Brutus' father. In his youth, the dictator had conducted an affair with the reputed love of his life: Brutus' mother, Servilia. In any case, it is more likely that the only sounds coming from the mortally wounded man's mouth were agonised groans.

▶ To learn more about Caesar's demise, listen to our six-part podcast series *Caesar: Death of a Dictator* at *historyextra.com/caesarpodcast*

POTENTIAL PATRICIDE? It has been suggested that Brutus, depicted here in bust form, was actually one of Caesar's offspring

IMPERIAL SISTERHOOD
Maria Theresa, Empress Elizabeth and Madame de Pompadour (*left to right*) formed a formidable alliance

40
The approximate number of minutes that the British empire and Zanzibar were at war on 27 August 1896, making it the shortest conflict in recorded history.

Who belonged to the League of Three Petticoats?

SHORT ANSWER With a global war raging, a trio of powerful women brought their nations together

LONG ANSWER The Seven Years' War (1756–63) saw nations around the globe caught up in a complex web of alliances as Britain and France both vied to become the world's supreme imperial power. To make matters more confusing, the conflict came in the wake of the so-called Diplomatic Revolution of 1756, which had seen former friends suddenly become enemies. Notably, Austria had one eye fixed on regaining the valuable region of Silesia, which had been lost to Prussia during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48).

So, to win it back, Austria's Maria Theresa sided with France and Russia in opposition to Prussia. The latter also had a woman in charge, Empress Elizabeth, while the French king's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, was also key to the alliance. As such, it became known as the League of Three Petticoats.

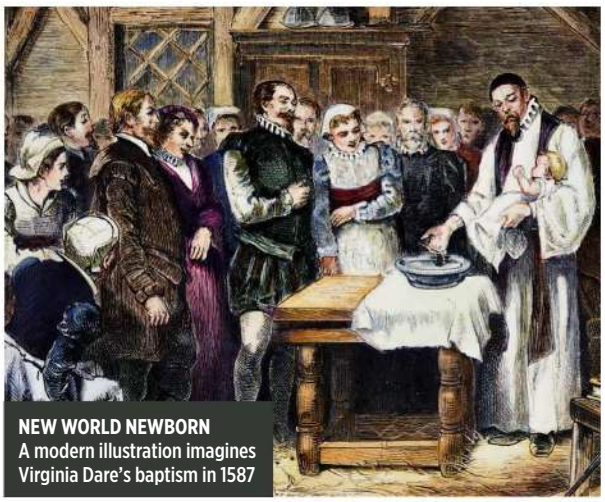
Austria, however, never got Silesia back, and Britain and Prussia ultimately came out of the war firmly on top.

Who was the first English baby born in America?

SHORT ANSWER All that is known about the child is her name – Virginia Dare – other than the myths

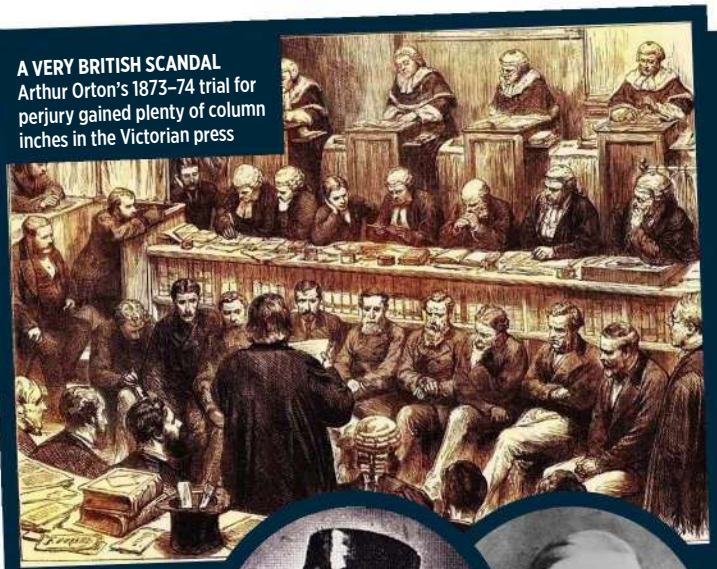
LONG ANSWER The birth of a baby girl on 18 August 1587 was an auspicious moment, the first child of English parents, Eleanor and Ananias Dare, in the New World and so a symbol of the future of the settlement. As such, she was given the same name as the land (itself named for the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth I): Virginia Dare.

That's where her known story ends. Virginia was born on Roanoke Island, and just days later her grandfather John White, the governor, left for England, only to return to find that everyone had vanished without a trace. The mystery has never been solved. Virginia passed into myth, and has since been the subject of dozens of songs and stories, with one particular folk tale suggesting that she was transformed into a white doe.



NEW WORLD NEWBORN
A modern illustration imagines Virginia Dare's baptism in 1587

GETTY IMAGES X8, ALAMY X1



A VERY BRITISH SCANDAL
Arthur Orton's 1873–74 trial for perjury gained plenty of column inches in the Victorian press

IGNOBLE CLAIM
Orton (*far right*) shown alongside a photograph of the real Lord Tichborne, missing since 1854

Who was the 'Tichborne Claimant'?

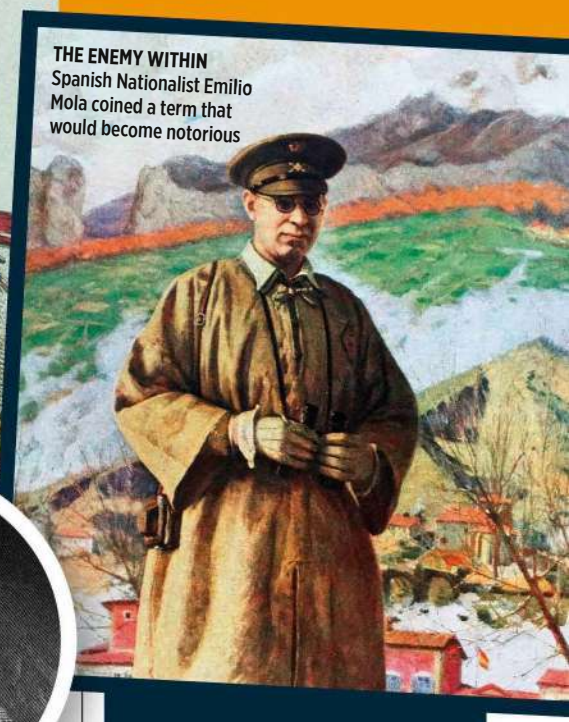
SHORT ANSWER Was he the missing heir to a title and riches, or simply a conman?

LONG ANSWER In 1854, Roger Charles Tichborne, heir to a baronetcy in Hampshire, disappeared in a shipwreck off the coast of Brazil. His mother, however, holding on to the slimmest of hopes that a passing vessel had picked him up, placed adverts in newspapers offering a "handsome reward" for information.

More than a decade later, her futile quest seemed to be over when an Australian butcher using the name Thomas Castro came forward claiming to be the lost heir. Okay, he looked different, couldn't remember crucial personal details, and nor did he have Tichborne's distinctive tattoos, but the overjoyed mother bought his story.

Not everyone was convinced, though. The claimant ended up in court and his true identity came out: Arthur Orton, from Wapping. Despite being handed a lengthy prison sentence, public support for the claimant – bolstered by the sale of souvenirs bearing his image – lingered for a few more years.

WHAT A CARVE UP!
An iconic James Gillray image shows William Pitt and Napoleon Bonaparte slicing up the globe



THE ENEMY WITHIN
Spanish Nationalist Emilio Mola coined a term that would become notorious

PODCAST

Did people recognise the figures portrayed by Georgian satirists?

BITING WIT
Gillray's talent for caricature was highly sought after by the great and (not-so) good

Answered by Alice Loxton, author of *UPROAR!: Satire, Scandal and Printmakers in Georgian London* (Icon Books, 2023)

Georgian satirists like James Gillray possessed a remarkable talent for capturing the essence of famous individuals. Through distortions of the subject's facial features and other physical attributes, they created distinctive characters that members of public could recognise across many different images. Whether mocking prominent politicians or members of the royal family, the perceptions these caricatures created have, in some cases, lingered to the present day – take the portrayal of Napoleon Bonaparte as a diminutive megalomanic, for instance.

To craft their caricatures, satirists would go to parliament, sketching the likes of William Pitt from the visitors' gallery inside the House of Commons. Rather than being offended, however, some politicians considered it to be something of a rite of passage. Future prime minister George Canning, for example, actively sought out Gillray's talents and asked that he be portrayed in the satirist's work.

Overall, these outlandish portrayals served multiple purposes: to entertain, to ridicule, and to offer a form of social commentary. From the perspective of today, they captured the essence of these figures in a way that transcends any written descriptions and allows us to tap into the collective consciousness of the Georgian era.

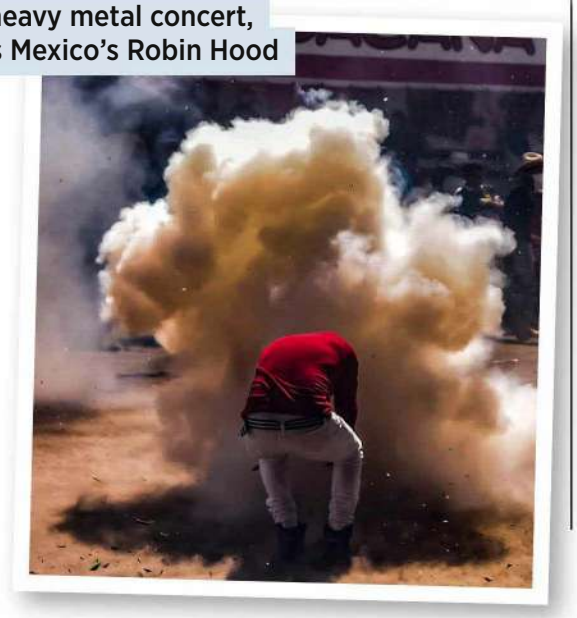
▶ To hear more from Alice Loxton on the history of Georgian satire, visit *historyextra.com/georgian-satire-pod*

How did the 'exploding hammers festival' begin?

SHORT ANSWER It may sound like a heavy metal concert, but the 17th-century oddity honours Mexico's Robin Hood

LONG ANSWER Every February, the Mexican town of San Juan de Vega hosts the dangerous-sounding 'exploding hammers festival'. It doesn't just sound dangerous: it involves attaching explosives to sledgehammers and smashing them down onto rail beams, causing blasts big enough to blow the ones wielding the hammers off their feet. According to legend, the event honours the town's patron saint, San Juanito, a Robin Hood-like figure who fought local landowners in the 17th century. Apparently the blasts represent the explosions that were seen during the battle.

The festival has since grown into a popular attraction, although tourists should be wary of shrapnel: in 2020, 43 injuries were reported.



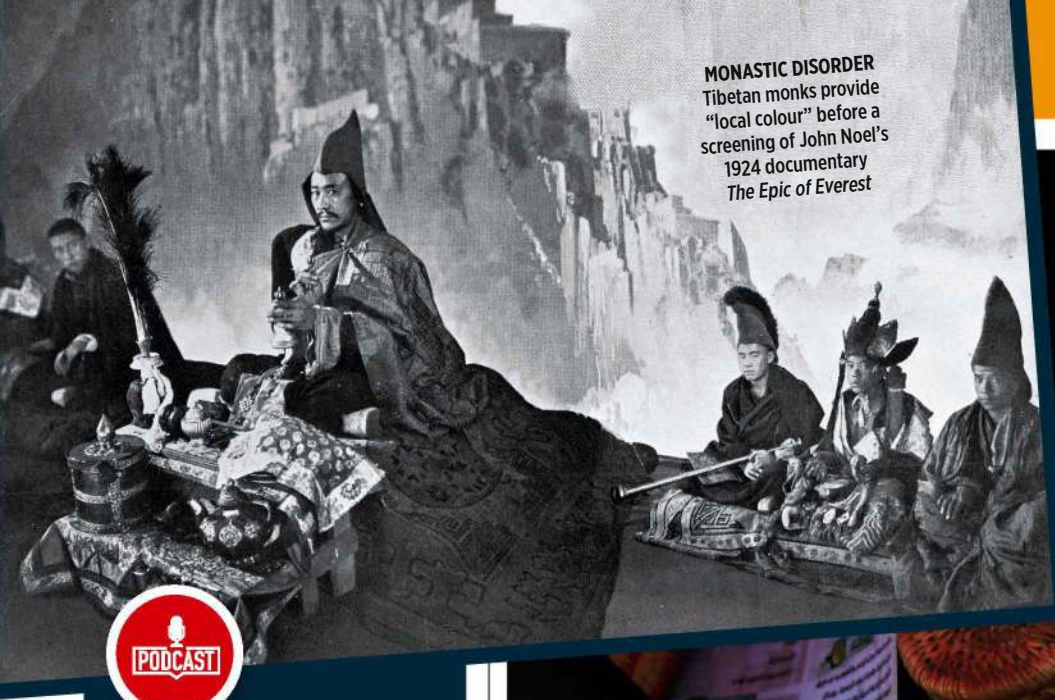
Where does the term 'fifth column' come from?

SHORT ANSWER A boast to a journalist during the Spanish Civil War invoked a modern Trojan horse

LONG ANSWER The notion of a 'fifth column' emerged during the Spanish Civil War, drawing its inspiration from a chilling metaphor. It was coined by General Emilio Mola Vidal, a major figure in the military rebellion against the democratic Spanish Republic that began on 17 July 1936. As four 'columns' of insurgent troops advanced on the Republican-held capital of Madrid that autumn, Mola informed a British journalist that he also had a 'fifth column' of supporters inside the city ready to pounce.

Whether true or not, the idea was unsettling enough to persuade the Spanish government to relocate its capital to Valencia. Meanwhile, the paranoia of infiltrators in their midst drove some Republicans to massacre prisoners detained in Madrid, suspected of harbouring sympathy for the military rebels.

The term continues to be used around the world today to describe covert elements seeking to undermine a nation's security from within its own borders.



MONASTIC DISORDER Tibetan monks provide "local colour" before a screening of John Noel's 1924 documentary *The Epic of Everest*

PODCAST

What was the Affair of the Dancing Lamas?

Answered by Dr Jonathan Westaway, expert on mountaineering history

Following the disastrous 1924 British Mount Everest expedition, which claimed the lives of climbers George Mallory and Andrew Irvine, filmmaker and mountaineer John Noel produced a documentary film called *The Epic of Everest* and showcased it worldwide. To promote his feature, Noel hired a group of Tibetan monks – referred to as 'lamas' – to perform pseudo-religious rituals in theatres and help give the film screenings some "local colour".

But despite the film's financial success, and Noel's partnership with the Royal Geographical Society and Alpine Club, the Tibetan government was appalled. Not only had Noel failed to seek permission from the monks' religious orders, but his presentation of Tibetan religious culture was deemed highly insensitive, sparking a diplomatic incident that strained relations with the British empire.

After nearly a decade of careful negotiations via the British Political Officer for Sikkim and Tibet, Britain was allowed to conduct another expedition in 1933.

▶ To hear more from Dr Jonathan Westaway on the history of Everest, visit *historyextra.com/everest-pod*

310

The decibels produced by the destructive 1883 eruption of the South Indonesian volcano Krakatoa – the loudest sound ever heard by human ears.

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X2

TIME FOR A BREAK
Coffea arabica swept across the Islamic world, filling a void left by the prohibition of alcohol

When was coffee first drunk?

PODCAST

Answered by **Professor Jonathan Morris**, author of *Coffee: A Global History* (Reaktion Books, 2018)

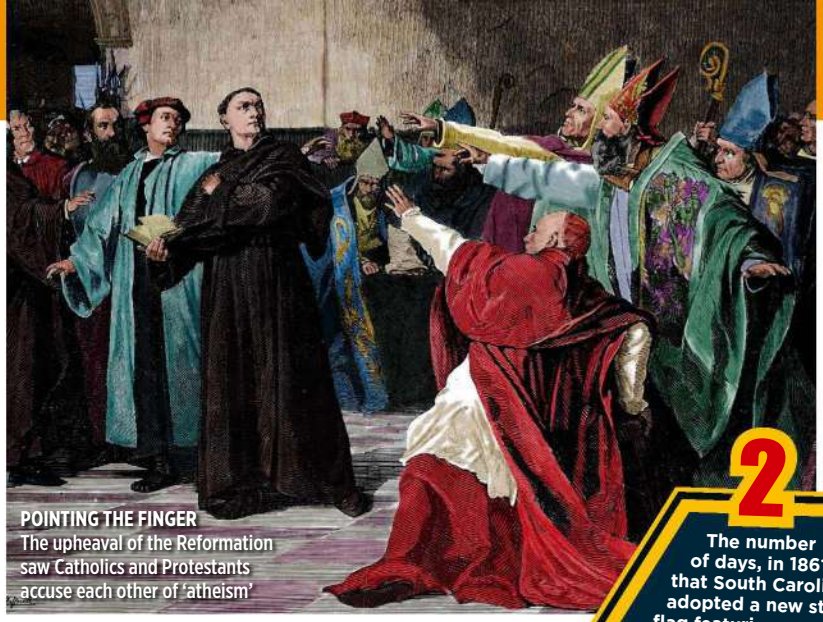
Coffee traces its origins to the highlands of southwest Ethiopia, where it first grew wild as an understorey plant in the forests. Different parts of the plant were used by indigenous groups, such as the Oromo, to make a variety of foodstuffs: leaves were steeped in water to make a tea-like beverage, while the cherries (containing the future coffee beans) were desiccated or blended with fats to create simple snacks.

However, the story of coffee as the beverage we know and recognise today begins with its export from Ethiopia to Yemen in the medieval period, when it was adopted as an alternative psychoactive ingredient to the khat plant, which had been used to create a type of drink used in religious ceremonies.

By the early 16th century, coffee – or *qishr* – was being imbibed socially in Yemen, with Muslim men gathering to partake in its pleasures. Despite efforts to regulate its consumption, the rapid acceptance of coffee within Islamic culture transformed people's social routines and had a lasting impact on society as a whole. Today, coffee – mostly made from the plant species *coffea arabica* – is consumed by countless millions of people worldwide.

▶ To hear more from Professor Jonathan Morris on the history of coffee, visit *historyextra.com/coffee-history-pod*

COFFEE GROUND ZERO
From its humble beginnings in the Ethiopian highlands, coffee has since conquered the world



POINTING THE FINGER
The upheaval of the Reformation saw Catholics and Protestants accuse each other of 'atheism'

2
The number of days, in 1861, that South Carolina adopted a new state flag featuring a golden palmetto tree on a blue field. It didn't catch on, so lawmakers altered the design to a white palmetto and crescent instead.

Did the Reformation lead to a rise in atheism?

PODCAST

Answered by **Professor Alec Ryrie**, author of *Unbelievers: An Emotional History of Doubt* (Harvard University Press, 2019)

During the Reformation, the word 'atheism' emerged in western Christian discussions following the discovery of its usage in classical texts. The term soon spread across Europe, with its first appearance in English being 1553.

Ironically, the emergence of atheism was helped by Martin Luther's emphasis on faith alone as the definition of Christianity. This Protestant repudiation of traditional Catholic doctrine led to both sides accusing the other of 'atheism', as they weaponised scepticism and trained their followers to challenge each other's beliefs. The cultivation of doubt among ordinary members of the public destabilised society and created a febrile climate.

In the end, disciplinary actions against suspected 'atheists' persisted into the 17th century and beyond, with the last known execution for 'atheism' in the British Isles occurring as late as 1698.

▶ To hear more from Professor Alec Ryrie on atheism, visit *historyextra.com/atheism-pod*

What was the first African nation to gain independence?

SHORT ANSWER While the gold medal tends to go to the Gold Coast, the question continues to cause heated debate

LONG ANSWER Calls for African self-government grew progressively louder only in the aftermath of World War II, until, on 6 March 1957, the Gold Coast stopped being a British colony. Under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, the newly named Ghana became a symbol of decolonisation, but it's important to note that its place in history is often qualified as being the 'first sub-Saharan nation' to gain independence. Sudan dates its break from Britain to 1 January 1956. In North Africa, Libya became its own kingdom in 1951, and Morocco and Tunisia separated from France in March 1956. The independence of Egypt, a country straddling Africa and Asia, goes back even further to 1922, although the British did hang around for another three decades and only withdrew in 1956.

DANCE OF FREEDOM
Ghanaian dancers rehearse for their independence celebrations in 1957

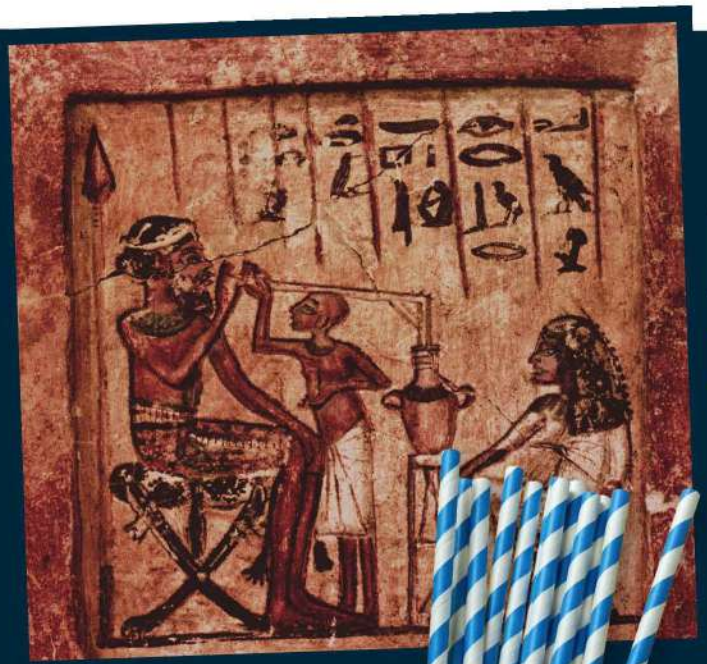
How old is the drinking straw?

SHORT ANSWER Slurping must have felt rather refined through the gold straws of the Sumerians

LONG ANSWER In 1888, US inventor Marvin Stone received a patent for a paper drinking straw, much to the relief of those fed up with sipping out of ryegrass stalks that left a grassy aftertaste and had a tendency to disintegrate when wet. But Stone merely added a twist (literally, as he introduced the spiral design) to an ancient drinking utensil.

The Sumerians, in what is now Iraq, crafted straws around 4,600 years ago, which they used when drinking vats of beer. Sumerian straws were much more cherished than the drinking implements of today, too, going by the example held by the British Museum made of gold and lapis lazuli.

But the Sumerians may not have even been the first civilisation to slurp their drinks in such a fashion. Strange tubes resembling drinking straws have also been discovered in the Caucasus, allegedly made by the Maykop culture during the fourth millennium BC.



SUCK IT AND SEE
A Syrian warrior drinks with a straw in this painted Egyptian relief from c1530 BC

GETTY IMAGES X7, ALAMY X1

UPPING THE STAKES
Able Archer was part of a wider Nato exercise that involved tank manouevres (*main*) and missile tests (*bottom right*)

What caused the Able Archer 83 nuclear scare?

SHORT ANSWER Nato had arranged a war game, but the Soviets didn't want to play along

LONG ANSWER The year 1983 had seen a rise in Cold War tensions, with the vehemently anti-communist US president Ronald Reagan dedicating vast sums to military hardware and announcing an elaborate new missile-defence system, pejoratively known as 'Star Wars'. So when in November the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) conducted a war games exercise to test its readiness for nuclear conflict in Europe, the Soviets were already spooked.

Able Archer 83 simulated a scenario in which escalation became unavoidable, complete with dummy warheads and a rise in the threat level to DEFCON 1. Yet Moscow – which, incidentally, had been pre-warned about the war game – looked on with alarm, believing the whole thing was a ploy to disguise a real and imminent attack on the Soviet Union and its satellite states in Eastern Europe.

Moscow put its arsenal on maximum combat alert and prepared to deploy submarines and aircraft. Although playing out in a less public arena than the Cuban Missile Crisis two decades earlier, Able Archer 83 was no less dangerous. A Soviet finger hovered over the big red button – a finger belonging to the sickly and paranoid premier, Yuri Andropov. Thankfully, the war game ended with nuclear escalation remaining a simulation rather than a reality. News of the reaction, though, encouraged Reagan to tone down his rhetoric of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" from then on.

What were Victorian attitudes to childbirth?

Answered by Dr Jessica Cox, author of *Confinement: The Hidden History of Maternal Bodies in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (The History Press, 2023)

In 1861, Queen Victoria advised her eldest daughter, Vicky, who had married and become a mother at a young age, not to share too many details about childbirth with her younger sister, Alice. Writing in a letter, Victoria relayed Alice's strong reluctance to having children, confiding that she dreaded the idea and would rather not have any. The queen was anxious for her daughter to remain oblivious of the "inevitable miseries" of labour, suggesting that ignorance might be preferable. Ultimately, the Victorian view seemed to be that women were better off not knowing the harsh realities of childbirth, as this might dissuade them entirely.

▶ To hear more from Dr Jessica Cox on pregnancy in Victorian Britain, visit *historyextra.com/victorian-pregnancy-pod*

PODCAST

ROYAL BROOD
Victoria enjoys the company of two of her many grandchildren

What was Whittington's Longhouse used for?

SHORT ANSWER The folk hero of pantomime gave a different meaning to 'public' toilet

LONG ANSWER Before he became best known for the rags-to-riches folk tale and pantomime, the real Richard 'Dick' Whittington was lord mayor of London in four stints between 1397 and 1420. He carved out a name for himself by serving as a moneylender to kings and financing a large number of building projects, which didn't stop with his death in 1423 since he left his fortune to the city.

Thanks to Whittington's ample sums of money, the Guildhall, Newgate Prison, churches, libraries, drainage systems and hospital wards were all either built or rebuilt. Then there was his other legacy: Whittington's Longhouse, a public toilet facility big enough for 128 people. Located in Cheapside and conveniently overhanging the Thames, the structure accommodated two rows of 64 seats. It continued to serve untold thousands until its destruction during the Great Fire of London in September 1666.

FLUSHING SUCCESS
Whittington's public loo project proved a hit with Londoners

HISTORY EXTRA PODCAST

LISTEN
To access all the podcast episodes mentioned in this month's Miscellany section, visit *historyextra.com/misc-sep-23* or scan the QR code

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ONE TO WATCH

Rose Williams reprises her role as Charlotte Heywood in the second series of *Sanditon*, now streaming on ITVX

Ben Lloyd-Hughes also returns to play Heywood's love interest, Alexander Colbourne

Under the bonnet

Sanditon / Streaming via ITVX from Thursday 3 August

Sometimes, dramas can take a while to find an audience. This was certainly the case with *Sanditon*, a drama based on Jane Austen's unfinished novel. Originally created by Andrew Davies, the man who famously put Colin Firth's Darcy in a wet shirt in his adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, it arrived with huge fanfare in 2019 but failed to achieve the kind of viewing figures that ITV had hoped for.

That looked as if it might be it until *Sanditon* was shown Stateside by PBS in its *Masterpiece* strand, when it became clear that the show could attract an international fanbase. It was renewed for two further seasons to complete its interweaving stories, and the second of these is now arriving to stream in the UK via ITVX.

Once again we find Sanditon, a seaside community, undergoing huge social changes because of the rise of tourism during the Georgian era, seen largely from the perspective of Charlotte Heywood (Rose Williams). This time around, she arrives back in Sanditon with a fiancé in tow. But Heywood has unresolved feelings for handsome Alexander Colbourne (Ben Lloyd-Hughes) – and of course, the more the two try to avoid each other, the more circumstances seem to throw them together. Elsewhere, Georgiana Lambe (Crystal Clarke) has a fight on her hands as she seeks to protect her inheritance.

There are also new characters to meet, including James Bolam of *New Tricks* and *Likely Lads* fame as Rowleigh Pryce, a curmudgeon and investor who teams up with developer Tom Parker (Kris Marshall). Pryce's encounters with the ever-formidable Lady Denham (Anne Reid) promise to be great fun.

As for Lady Montrose (Emma Fielding), she is a quintessential Austen figure, which is to say a matriarch who wants to marry off her children, charismatic Lord Henry (Edward Davis) and Lydia (Alice Orr-Ewing). But the best efforts of Lady Montrose are complicated both by her son harbouring a secret and by her daughter's fierce sense of independence.

ITVX X2

WEEKLY TV & RADIO
Visit ***historyextra.com*** for updates on upcoming TV and radio programmes

The story of how a former footballer and his accomplice stole an artistic masterpiece is told in a new Sky documentary

Master criminal?

The Man Who Stole The Scream / Sky Documentaries, August

On 12 February 1994, while Norwegians and those in the wider world directed their attention to the opening of the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, two men broke into the National Gallery in Oslo. They walked out with the gallery's version of Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893), reckoned to be worth more than $100m, and left a note that said simply, "Thanks for the poor security."

But why did they commit this crime? Who better to ask than one of those who carried out the theft, former footballer Pål Enger, who here helps relate the story both of the theft, and the game of cat and mouse that followed – a tale of obsessiveness and, ultimately, broken friendships.

The documentary also explores how a Scotland Yard art theft specialist proved to be a central figure in eventually recovering the famous painting.

Expect scandals, scheming and swearing galore in the third series of comedy drama *The Great*

Murderous statecraft

The Great / streaming now via Lionsgate+

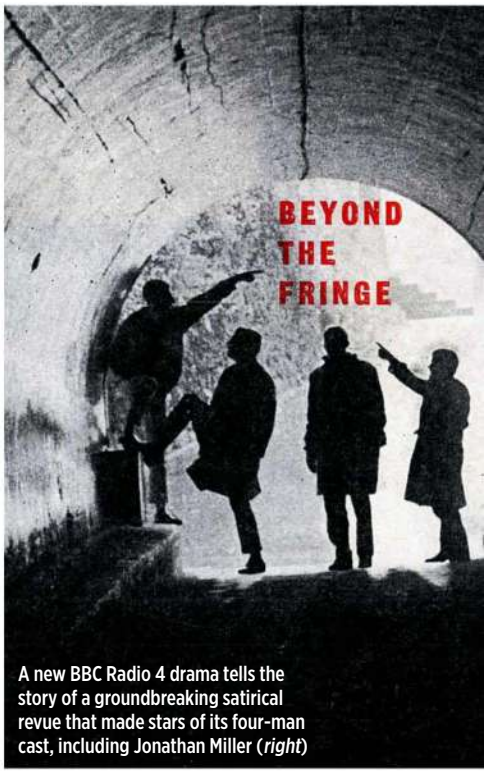
One day, we may collectively decide we're a little bored of shows that, for all they have the glossiness of expensive period dramas, deliberately play fast and loose with the historical record to comic effect. But as long as shows are as irreverent and downright funny as *The Great*, created by Tony McNamara (co-writer of *The Favourite*), that day may lie a while in the future.

For those who have yet to catch the show, which returned this summer for a third season and styles itself as an "almost entirely untrue story", The Great of the title is Catherine (Elle Fanning), a highly educated and independent young German noblewoman who marries Emperor Peter of Russia (Nicholas Hoult). Even accepting this wasn't a love match, things go badly almost from the off as Catherine, after discovering she stands to inherit the throne as empress and despite finding Russia hopelessly unsophisticated, resolves to dispose of her husband so she can take control of his country.

As series three kicks off (mild spoilers ahead), she has yet to succeed, although not for want of trying, and we re-meet the couple immediately in the wake of Catherine's latest attempt at killing her charismatic and curiously devoted spouse. (Sample line: "I once killed three men and ate a whole reindeer stuffed with a goose, stuffed with a pomegranate – f***ing amazing.")

The lesson Catherine takes from all this? That in future she has to be better at politics. As the series progresses, storylines take in the American Revolutionary War and Catherine's attempts, despite her own proclivities, to outlaw murder.

Elle Fanning stars as Catherine the Great in a series that plays history strictly for laughs, rather than accuracy



A new BBC Radio 4 drama tells the story of a groundbreaking satirical revue that made stars of its four-man cast, including Jonathan Miller (*right*)

HULU X2, GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X1

Repression and remembrance

Since 1989, Memorial has sought justice for the victims of Stalin's purges and gulags

Memorial No More? A History of Russian Forgetting / BBC Radio 4, August

In October 2022, Russian human rights organisation Memorial was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, sharing the honour with Belarusian activist Ales Bialiatski and Ukraine's Center for Civil Liberties. The recognition of its work in "document[ing] war crimes, human rights abuses and the abuse of power" came less than a year after Memorial had effectively been outlawed in Russia, although international branches still operate.

To understand why Putin's regime clamped down on Memorial, it helps to understand its history. In 1989, at the height of *glasnost*, Memorial emerged as an organisation dedicated to documenting crimes against humanity in the Soviet Union – especially those dating from when Joseph Stalin, who unleashed the Great Terror on his nation and established a network of Gulags, was in charge. But once Putin consolidated power, he saw Memorial's work as incompatible with his brand of militaristic nationalism. Its leaders were pursued through Russia's corrupt court system under legislation that cast the organisation as a 'foreign agent', and were even accused of promoting Nazism.

In a moving documentary, Russia historian Catherine Merridale charts the story of Memorial. It's a personal tale in that Merridale not only knew Memorial's founders, but spent time working in its cramped archives.

The programme also illustrates the level of personal risk for those involved as Merridale shares her memories of Yury Dmitriev, who made it his mission to locate graves dating from the Soviet era in the Karelia region of northern Russia. Dmitriev was recently sentenced to 15 years in a labour camp following a trial in a closed court on what the documentary makers – and human rights campaigners say – were fake charges.

Memorial chief Yan Rachinsky accepts the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022, flanked by Ales Bialiatski's wife Natallia Pintsyuk (*left*) and Center for Civil Liberties head Oleksandra Matviichuk (*right*)

Cocking a snoop

Turning Point: Beyond the Fringe / BBC Radio 4, Saturday 5 August

We live in an informal, irreverent age where it's routine to poke fun at those in power, and for journalists to put tough questions to public figures. The world of the 1960s was rather different, far more deferential and socially conservative.

This does much to explain just why *Beyond the Fringe* was seen as so radical. Written and performed by the pre-Fab Four quartet of Alan Bennett, Peter Cook, Jonathan Miller and Dudley Moore, it was a revue that debuted at the Edinburgh Fringe and which, in the words of Miller, set out to be "anti-establishment, anti-capital punishment, anti-colour bar and [curiously] anti-1960".

It was a huge hit and, in May 1961, the show opened at the Fortune Theatre in the West End of London. Helped along by a positive review from Kenneth Tynan, it became a sensation. When the show transferred to New York, President John F Kennedy attended a performance. The satire boom had begun and, if it would take the Beatles to make the decade truly swing, the 1960s were at least starting to limber up.

Written by Jeremy Front, this drama in the *Turning Point* strand, which focuses on key moments in recent history, takes us behind the scenes of *Beyond the Fringe*, a way to explore why it was so significant.

Shifting the pounds

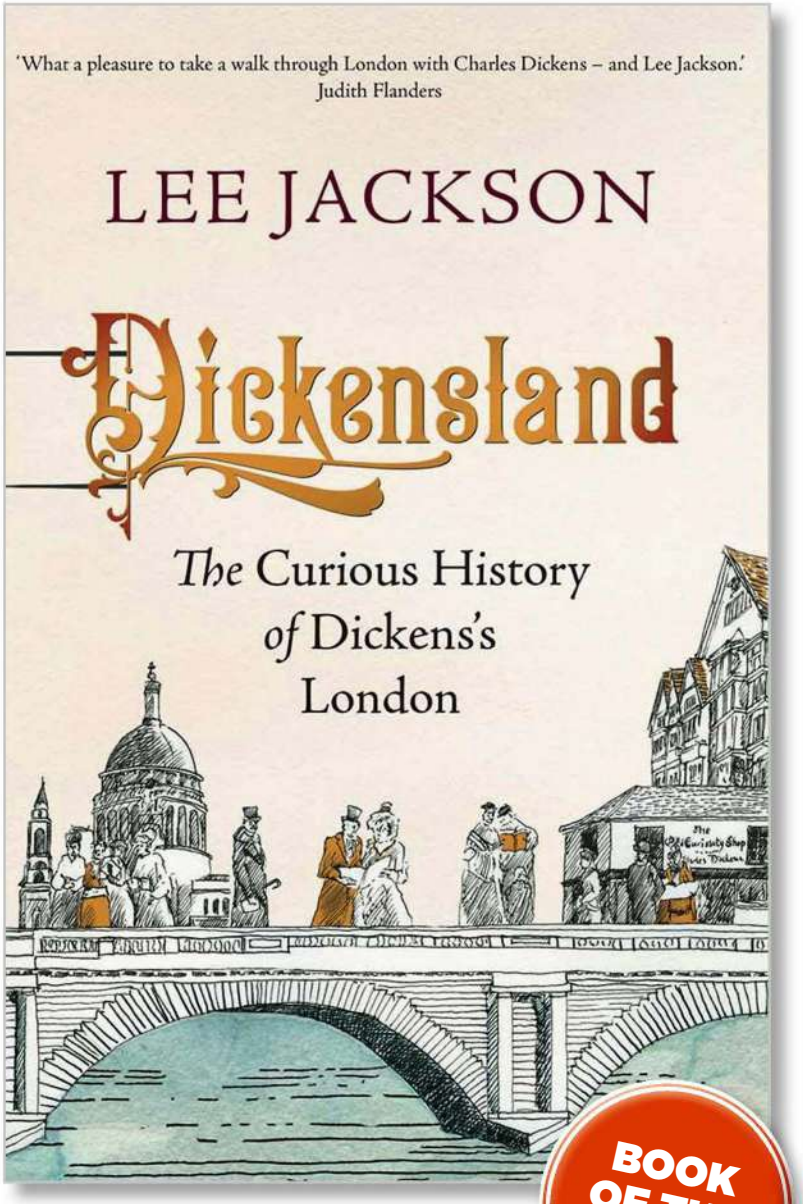
Archive on 4: Live and Let Diet / BBC Radio 4, Saturday 5 August

In 1963, New York City entrepreneur Jean Nidetch (*pictured*) created Weight Watchers. Having struggled with obesity throughout her life, she wanted to create an organisation that would be mutually supportive rather than stern and judgemental.

Six decades later, millions of us around the world are trying to shed the pounds, efforts that all too often fail. So why is it so difficult to lose weight? That's the question Fern Britton discusses as she trawls through the archives in search of the historical perspective on dieting.

BOOKS & PODCASTS

THIS MONTH'S BEST HISTORICAL READS AND LISTENS


'What a pleasure to take a walk through London with Charles Dickens – and Lee Jackson.'
Judith Flanders
LEE JACKSON
Dickensland
The Curious History of Dickens's London

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Dickensland: The Curious History of Dickens's London

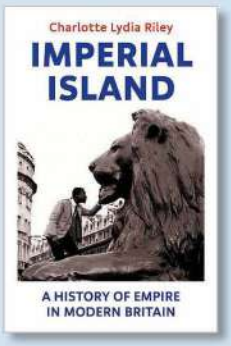
By Lee Jackson
Yale University Press, £20, hardback, 288 pages

Such was the fascination with the London depicted in the novels of Charles Dickens that Victorian and Edwardian readers soon flocked to the city in a bid to explore its real-life counterpart. Yet even within half a century of the writer's death, visitors to 'Dickensland' encountered a metropolis already in the grips of change. Lee Jackson here investigates this cultural tourism and what it tells us about our view of fact and fiction, the past and the present.

Imperial Island: A History of Empire in Modern Britain

By Charlotte Lydia Riley
Bodley Head, £25, hardback, 384 pages

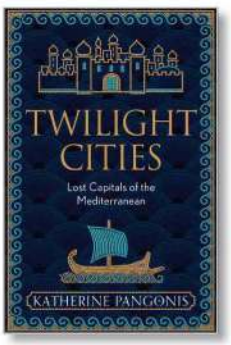
Far from being a distant relic, the British empire and its legacy shaped post-World War II Britain in ways often coloured by celebration or silence. That's a key argument of this book, which draws on diverse examples – the impact of education, the 1985 Live Aid fundraising concert – to assess its political, social and cultural repercussions. You may disagree with some of its conclusions but, at a time when discussion of the subject can quickly devolve into ill-informed polemic, it offers an extensively researched, thought-provoking alternative.

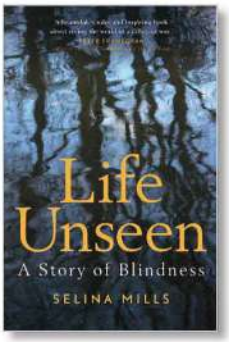


Twilight Cities: Lost Capitals of the Mediterranean

By Katherine Pangonis
W&N, £25, hardback, 288 pages

This evocative book takes readers on a journey through five Mediterranean cities – Antioch, Carthage, Ravenna, Syracuse and Tyre – to delve deep into their long histories. Blending historical research with despatches from the sites themselves, it offers vibrant insights into the world in which these bustling, powerful metropolises were at their height. It also, as its title implies, charts the forces and factors that led to their eventual decline. Epic and vivid, it's as revealing about the region as it is the nature of empire.





Life Unseen: A Story of Blindness

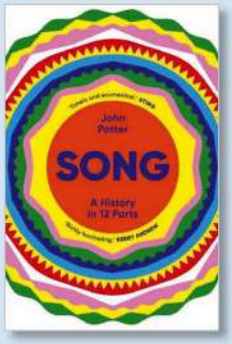
By Selina Mills
Bloomsbury, £20, hardback, 288 pages

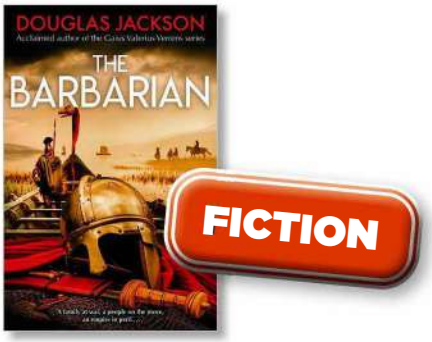
In 2002, journalist and author Selina Mills began to lose her sight. As well as coming to terms with her new reality, her thoughts soon turned to the ways blindness has been considered throughout history. How have blind people been regarded? And why was their existence so often greeted with fantastical misunderstandings or moral crusading? Combining the author's own experiences with those of people from across the centuries, this book aims to tackle those questions – and to put their voices back at the centre of the story.

Song: A History in 12 Parts

By John Potter
Yale University Press, £20, hardback, 368 pages

Modern technology means that many of us have access to millions of songs almost instantly via mobile phone or computer – a world away from the pre-gramophone need to be in a singer's presence. John Potter uses 12 key songs, composed from the 12th century onward, as a springboard to chart that evolving relationship between performer and audience, and what the medium said about wider society. Many of the examples may be unfamiliar to 21st-century listeners; thanks to that technology, new musical and historical discoveries await.





The Barbarian

By Douglas Jackson
Bantam, £20, hardback, 368 pages

Pirates, murder, impossible odds and a dark secret: all lie in wait for Roman cavalry commander Marcus Flavius Victor as his band of warriors embark on a desperate journey out of a decaying Britannia. It's the year 406 AD, and the uneasy allegiances and gathering clouds of the final years of the Roman empire threaten them at every turn. Douglas Jackson's typically dynamic novel thrusts readers into the heart of the action, conjuring up suitably larger-than-life characters along the way.

PODCAST WHAT TO LISTEN TO...

Each month we bring you three of our favourite podcast offerings from the BBC and HistoryExtra

Why Britain fell in love with the NHS

bit.ly/NHSPod124

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the National Health Service – an institution that has come to occupy a central role in Britain's national psyche. Dr Andrew Seaton chronicles the development of the NHS, from its birth pains in the 1940s to the challenges posed by changing political ideologies and shifting demographics.

History's Secret Heroes: series one

bit.ly/HSHPod124

This BBC Radio 4 series sees actor Helena Bonham Carter highlight often overlooked stories of men and women who helped turn the tide of World War II. From a daring prison break to a team of Norwegian skiers on an unlikely, high-stakes mission, these 10 tales offer new perspectives on a conflict that continues to fascinate, almost 80 years on.

Everything you wanted to know about 1980s Britain

bit.ly/1980sPod124

It was the decade of Margaret Thatcher and Princess Diana, Bucks Fizz and Boy George, the miners' strike and the Aids crisis. Professor Lucy Robinson here tackles listener questions queries about the 1980s – a decade that continues to loom large in our cultural consciousness. And Bananarama fans rejoice: the band plays a key role.

ON THE PODCAST

CURATED HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HISTORYEXTRA PODCAST ARCHIVE

6 PODCAST EPISODES ABOUT WITCHCRAFT TO STREAM NOW

Looking to discover more about the history of witchcraft? We've rounded up some of the best *HistoryExtra* podcast episodes on the topic, featuring historians Owen Davies, Marion Gibson, John Callow, Will Pooley and Ronald Hutton

WITCHES' COVEN

In this wide-ranging episode recorded in spring 2022, Owen Davies answers listeners' top questions on witchcraft. Covering everything from the legal definition of magic to whether the dark arts were synonymous with certain professions, this is an essential introduction.

THE WITCH'S MARK

We spoke to Ronald Hutton about his book *The Witch* in this interview from 2017. Taking a broad approach that spans shamanism, folklore and witch trials, he explains how witchcraft has been an enduring source of fear throughout the world for more than 2,000 years.

ENGLAND'S LAST WITCHES

Historian John Callow considers the tragic case of the Bideford witches in this episode from December 2021. In 1682, three Devon women became the last individuals to be hanged for witchcraft in England, but how has history treated them since?

RURAL PARANOIA

Why did an epidemic of finger-pointing engulf a remote Essex village in the 1580s? In this March 2023 episode, Marion Gibson investigates the witch hunt that overwhelmed St Osyth and considers what this case of moral panic can tell us about life in Elizabethan England.

FRENCH WITCHES

What impact did the French Revolution have on popular attitudes towards witchcraft? From bewitched cars to mail-order charms, Will Pooley reveals the surprising history of how supernatural beliefs adapted to a rapidly modernising world in this episode from summer 2021.

WITCH HUNTERS

What drove individuals to become 'witchfinders' in Stuart Britain? In March 2022, historian Marion Gibson spoke to us about the methods used to extract confessions from those accused of supernatural wrongdoing – from strip-searches and sleep deprivation to 'swimming'.

HISTORY EXTRA PODCAST

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CROSSWORD

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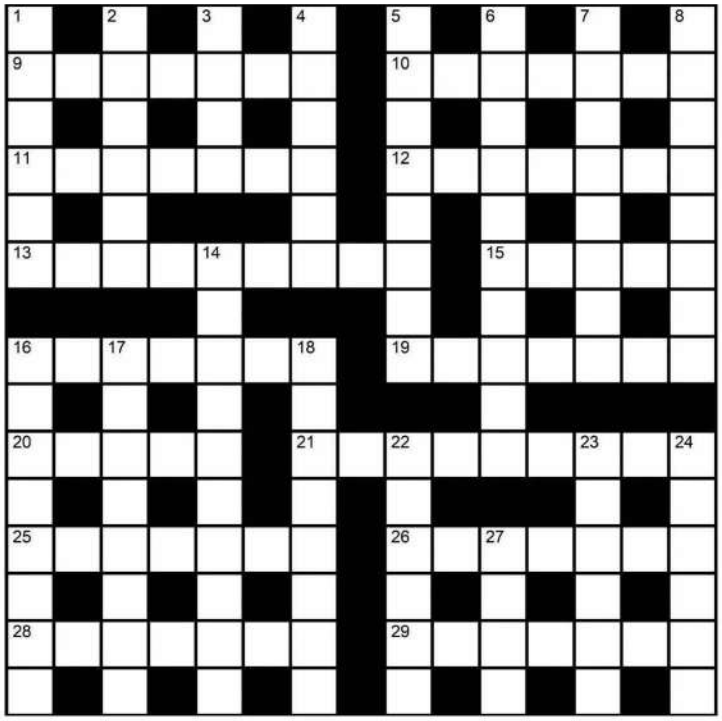
ACROSS

9 Sir Walter ___ (d1618), English soldier, statesman and explorer (7)
10 Paris Hilton or Ariana Rockefeller, perhaps (7)
11 Andy ___ (1949–84), US entertainer (7)
12 ___ Lane, Sheffield football stadium that first opened in 1855 (7)
13 See 17 Down
15 Textile developed in Nîmes, France (5)
16 Fulgencio ___ (1901–73), dictator of Cuba from 1952 to 1959 (7)
19 Historic city in the south of Italy (7)
20 Wolf-pack leader in Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) (5)
21 Name given to the terrorist Ted Kaczynski (1942–2023) (9)
25 *Little* ___, term for an edition of quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung (3,4)
26 See 17 Down
28 Manhattan district developed around the estate of the scholar C Clarke Moore (7)
29 *Jude the* ___, 1895 novel by Thomas Hardy (7)

DOWN

1 European Capital of Culture in 2000 (6)
2 Bessie ___, mistress of Henry VIII (6)
3 Former name of Thailand (4)
4 "___ is the nursery of music, joy, life, and eternity" – John Donne (6)
5 1963 Alfred Hitchcock thriller (3,5)



Set by Richard Smyth

6 Luigi ___ (1867–1936), Italian dramatist (10)
7 One who voted against the UK leaving the European Union in 2016 (8)
8 Neapolitan song written in 1898 (1,4,3)
14 Capital city of Alabama from 1826 to 1846 (10)
16 Woman loved by Dante Alighieri (8)
17/13/26 1941 Western starring Errol Flynn as General George Custer (4,4,4,5,5,2)
18 President of Pakistan from 1958 to 1969 (4,4)
22 Archaic term for Britain (6)
23 Member of an ethnic and linguistic group of Spain and France (6)
24 Historic city in Brittany (6)
27 Great ___, river of southeast England, re-routed several times since 1236 (4)

CHANCE TO WIN

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Pax: War and Peace in Rome's Golden Age
by Tom Holland

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SOLUTION Nº 122

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LETTERS

Reader Paul Smith wonders whether his great-grandfather is in this poignant photograph depicting the 17th Service Battalion, King's Liverpool Regiment

FAMILY TIES

I read your Essential Guide to Life in the Trenches (July 2023) with great interest, but I was particularly intrigued by the photograph on page 47 (*also shown above*), depicting soldiers of the 17th Service Battalion, King's Liverpool Regiment, saying prayers before entering the trenches. Do you know when and where it was taken?

My own great-grandfather served with the battalion, having enlisted on 3 September 1914, but he was killed in February 1917 during an air raid on the hospital in Salonika where he was being treated after being wounded in action. Sadly, he left behind a wife and four children, the oldest being my grandmother, who was 15 when he died.

Paul Smith, by email

EDITOR REPLIES:

Thank you for getting in touch. I've done some digging around online and found the photograph listed on the Imperial War Museum website. According to their information, it's a snapshot of a church service taken on 29 July 1916, before the soldiers entered the front line trenches in the Carnoy Valley, on the Somme. The Somme offensive was about a month underway when this photo was taken. It's an incredibly poignant image and your great-grandfather may well be pictured among the soldiers. It's impossible to imagine how the men must have been feeling during that moment of prayer.

GETTY IMAGES X2

A CHEMICAL LEGACY

In the 'Five Women in Science History You've (Probably) Never Heard of' article in your June 2023 issue, you mentioned that the Austrian-Swedish physicist Lise Meitner did not get a Nobel Prize for her work in atomic research. She did receive a posthumous honour, though. In 1997, Meitner had a synthetic element named after her – meitnerium, or element number 109.

J Lockwood, Washington DC

THE DEADLIEST DAY

While Peter Hart is right to challenge the myth surrounding the incompetence of British generals during World War I (Essential Guide to Life in the Trenches, July 2023) it is worth bearing in mind that this myth has mainly arisen due to their actions on the ghastly first day of the Somme on 1 July 1916, which resulted in more than 57,000 British casualties.

On the Allied right of the attack, the British and French did have some success. Here, they had a better fire plan but with limited objectives, which was more in keeping with General Henry Rawlinson's idea of 'bite and hold'. They also benefited from far more French artillery. But for the rest of the attack, they suffered disastrous losses because of the failure of the long and heavy preliminary artillery bombardment to destroy the German barbed wire and trenches. Surely the British generals should have considered this before unleashing waves of infantry?

With this in mind, I find it ironic that Major General Stuart-Wortley of the 46th Division – who, from his experience at the battle of Loos in 1915, had argued for a limited and methodical attack – was sacked after the battle. His mistake was perhaps having the right strategy.

Fortunately, the British generals swiftly learned from their incompetence on the first day of the Somme, but a lot of men were lost unnecessarily in the process.

G Bantock, Dorset

Could the humble domestic yak be to blame for a host of 'Yeti sightings' in the Himalayas?

YETI OR YAK?

Your enjoyable feature about the hunt for the Abominable Snowman (August 2023) described searches not only for the elusive Yeti, but also for other fantastic beasts whose existence is perhaps more likely attributable to vivid imagination, mistaken identity or fraudulent publicity stunts.

Some of these beasts are certainly very profitable. The hunt for the Loch Ness Monster, for example, generates £40m for the Scottish economy every year even though the creature itself has never been seen for certain.

Our fascination with the Yeti, however, is different. It continues simply because we seem terrified by the very possibility of encountering another creature at such high altitude.

Yet the domestic yak, a species of long-haired cattle, lives happily in the Himalayas and the Tibetan plateau at an altitude of 16,500ft – three-fifths of the height of Everest. With its large, sturdy frame and dense, thick fur it could easily be mistaken for a more mysterious creature, given the appalling weather conditions encountered in that part of the world. Its hooves would also explain the strange footprints climbers have found.

Apart from the yak, an estimated 140 million people around the world live permanently at altitudes of 12,000-13,000ft, and three million of them in Tibet alone. Is it really so unlikely that a mountaineer could suddenly come across another creature in the snowy emptiness of the Himalayas?

Ian MacDonald, by email

NEXT ISSUE

••• ON SALE 31 AUGUST •••

JANE AUSTEN'S ENGLAND

Discover the conflicting world of the Regency period – from fashion and flirtations, to the turmoil of war and a country on the brink of the Industrial Revolution

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CROSSWORD WINNERS

The three lucky winners of the prize crossword in issue 121 are as follows:

J Brown, Slough
J Taylor, London
G Treliving, Durham

Congratulations! You've each won a copy of *Tudor Children* by Nicholas Orme.

We will post your prizes out as soon as possible.

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GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X1

PERUVIAN GROOVE
c1960s

The annual Festival de la Candelaria in Puno, Peru, blends Catholic traditions with pre-Columbian Andean customs and rites. Celebrated in early February, it is the third-largest festival in South America, featuring music and colourful performances by thousands of dancers and musicians from the Andean Altiplano. The festival's origins lie in agricultural rituals and incorporate elements from the Quechua and Aymara ethnic groups around Lake Titicaca. The *diablada*, or 'devil dance', is a noted highlight, with performers wearing spectacular costumes and masks, while a dance competition in the Torres Belon Stadium (*seen here*) and a 12-hour-long Folkloric Parade also contribute to the celebrations. In 2014, the festival was declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by Unesco.

GETTY IMAGES

PETER SOMMER
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